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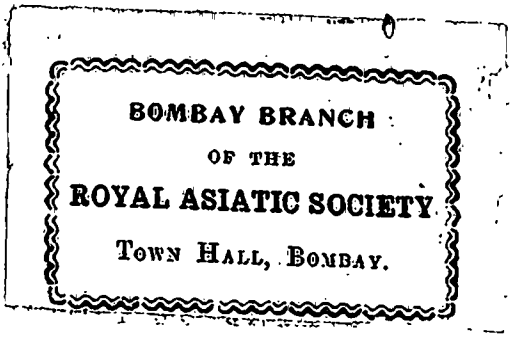

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Procesion conduciendo las cenizas del Sr. ITURBIDE, de San Francisco á Catedral, el 26 de Octubre de 1838

Procession carrying the remains of Sr. ITURBIDE, from San Francisco to the Cathedral, the 26 of October 1838

A VISIT TO MEXICO,

BY

THE WEST INDIA ISLANDS,

YUCATAN AND UNITED STATES,

WITH

Observations and Adventures on the Way.

BY

WM. PARISH ROBERTSON,
AUTHOR OF "LETTERS ON PARAGUAY" ETC.,

32755
ac

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

A.A.C.11

LONDON:
SIMPKIN, MARSHALL & Co.
STATIONERS' HALL COURT.

1853.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY WERTHEIMER AND CO.,
CIRCUS PLACE, FINSBURY CIRCUS.

TO MY DAUGHTER,

WHO,

IMPELLED BY FILIAL AFFECTION,

ACCOMPANIED ME IN MY WANDERINGS,

SHARED MY DANGERS,

LIGHTENED MY CARES, AND ENHANCED MY JOYS,

THE FOLLOWING RECORD OF OUR TRAVEL,

IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED,

BY

WILLIAM PARISH ROBERTSON.

16, Norfolk Terrace, Bayswater,
14*th March*, 1853.

PREFACE.

I HAVE not much to say by way of Preface to the two volumes, which I now submit to the candid review of my readers. I can scarcely consider the matter of sufficient gravity to enlist professed critics in my behalf; yet seeing the work affects not to take any high rank in literature, I hope its modest pretensions may entitle it to an indulgent perusal by my friends.

The reader will readily perceive that the second volume is much more varied, in the information it conveys, than the first.

The fact is, I should have suppressed many of the earlier details of our voyage and travels, had I foreseen the extent to which matter was likely to grow upon my hands. But before I discovered the error I had committed, the whole of the first

volume, and some part of the second, were in the press. I *could* not then retrench the too diffuse details in the former; and I *would* not suppress the more important informatiou in the latter.

I have taken some pains in collating the lucubrations of most of the writers on Mexico who have preceded me; and where I have been sure their information was correct, their descriptions faithful, and their observations just, I have not hesitated to reproduce their corroborative testimony, interwoven with my own. I have, with very great pleasure, read and extracted from the standard and elaborate work, written many years ago by Sir Henry George Ward, now the Lord High Commissioner of the Ionian Islands. Of Madame C—de la B—'s charming work, I have had repeatedly occasion to speak most highly; and now and then (I hope not too often), to transfer specimens of her piquante matter to my own pages. I further much recommend to my readers, the work of Mr. Brantz Mayer, which teems with information. To these distinguished writers I most readily acknowledge the obligation under which I have been laid.

The slight history I have given of Yucatan, I think will be found to contain something novel to the general reader; while I believe I may safely say, on the other hand, that in no other work on Mexico, will be found an account so full and so interesting, as I have been able, with the assistance of my talented friend, Mr. J. H. Buchan, to give of the celebrated mines and district of Real del Monte. Its present flourishing condition, shews its immense mineral capabilities, and profitable returns, when developed with spirit, tempered by methodical judgment and well-regulated economy. And Real del Monte presents agricultural claims, peculiarly favourable for colonists from northern climes. All proves, in fact, most clearly, what *might* have been done, heretofore, with the splendid district of Real del Monte, had *prudence* sat at the helm in working it out with British capital.

For the application of such aid to the advancement of the mineral interests of the Mexican Republic, its present political state may be considered unfavourable. But order may ere long be restored—as I sincerely pray it may—and then the first and the greatest want of Mexico towards

the development of its riches, that of railway traffic, may be supplied. In no country in the known world, I make bold to say, would any railway produce such brilliant results, as a well considered line from Vera Cruz to the city of Mexico.

London, 1st March, 1853.

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PART I.

SOUTHAMPTON TO CAMPEACHY.

MEXICO
& TEXAS.
NEW MEXICO
TEXAS
CALIFORNIA
GULF OF
MEXICO

A VISIT TO MEXICO.

LETTER I.

PRELIMINARY.

COURTEOUS READER,

NINE years ago, my brother and I finished and published a Second Series of our travels and adventures in the ex-Colonies of Spain, under the title of "Letters on South America." These letters had been preceded by the first of the series, entitled, "Letters on Paraguay," and "Francia's Reign of Terror." The two brought our personal adventures and historical memoranda down to the close of 1820. We proposed to carry them down to 1834, when we had both finally quitted the great Southern Hemisphere; and, in point of fact, I have still in my possession a

manuscript volume on Chili and Peru, written by my brother. But I had the misfortune to lose, by his death, towards the close of 1843, the dearest friend I ever possessed; and I then abandoned all thought of again appearing as an author. The usual cares and troubles of life had gradually surrounded me in my native land, and my daily avocations became of too arduous and constant a nature to permit my indulging in literary recreations.

So the travels of both my brother and myself in Chili and Peru—his by death, and mine by strife with the world—were laid on the shelf; and there seemed to be no chance then of my having any *other* excuse than that of South America, for again obtruding myself on the public.

But the course of events brought me to be Consul for Peru, in 1845, and Consul-General of Ecuador in London, in 1847. These nominations led to my becoming a member of the Committee of Spanish American Bondholders; and, in this capacity, I undertook a mission to Mexico, soon after that Republic had concluded a peace with the United States of America. I prepared, accordingly, to proceed to the land of the Aztecs, under the

somewhat pretentious title of Mexican Commissioner. This was in August, 1848.

Parliament having just broken up, and the ministerial vacations commenced, my departure was delayed by an official non-intercourse for nearly three months, throwing it into the dreary winter season. Two days only before the sailing of the packet of the 2nd December, were my arrangements in London concluded; so that eight-and-forty hours were barely allowed to me, and to my daughter, who was my companion, to prepare for the voyage and travels we were about to undertake. So closely were we run, that we only got on board with the mails, on receipt of which the packet got under weigh. All the passengers had preceded us, so that, at any rate, we escaped the jostling and bustle which attend the four-and-twenty hours prior to the sailing of a West India packet, to the discomfort of the passengers at large.

We sailed, however, amid all the confusion consequent on the departure of a large packet from England, crowded with passengers for foreign lands. Our floating habitation, the Avon, a fine steamer of 1800 tons measurement, was commanded by Captain Hast; and our start was

in characteristic style. All the passengers, with their friends, who had gone on board with them in the morning, sat down, before our arrival with the mails, to a substantial lunch. From this repast, the last lingering gourmands were hurried away by the ringing of the bell for visitors to leave the steamer; and the deck of our little steam tender was soon thronged with our retiring friends. Our rigging manned, a deafening cheer rose from our ship—a cheer lustily responded to. Then we had a simultaneous cheer, with waving of hats and handkerchiefs, from packet and tender together; and anon the Avon majestically cleaved the waters on her appointed voyage.

Such was the start, dear Reader, that led my young companion and myself into a series of adventures and devious travel, which some of my friends, too partial as the result may prove, have thought of sufficient interest to lay before you; and to make me venture to give you some of my observations "on the way," and on the various places we visited. I am very dubious myself as to the chance of my pages meeting with even a small portion of public patronage, more

especially as I have allowed my evanescent pages to lie by me for two years, under the worry of a London life; but having at last obtained a little rest and quiet, I have "looked up" my MS. and now submit it to your impartial judgment.

Nearly all the matter which follows was written from time to time, during my year's absence, in the form of letters, as here represented; written to amuse, without the slightest pretension to either depth or research. The nature of my mission would allow of neither, even supposing I had had time or ability for the task. Besides, I have gone over little or no new ground, and all I can allege is, that I have had good opportunities of seeing what I have described.

With my own letters you will find interspersed, a few extracts from those of my daughter, which, if they have no other merit, possess that of narrative, unadorned for the press, for which they were never intended.

I am, dear Reader,

Your faithful servant,

W. PARISH ROBERTSON.

LETTER II.

THE PASSAGE FROM SOUTHAMPTON TO ST. THOMAS'S.

On board the Royal Mail Steamer "Avon,"
At Sea, 16th December, 1848.

WHAT a villanous passage we have had thus far! This is the very first day it has been possible for me to write; and even now we are rolling at such a rate, that I find it a difficult matter to guide my pen.

Fourteen days have we been at sea. I had hoped to devote some part of each to a journalized account of our progress and adventures; but we are constantly reckoning without our host, not only on land, but at sea; and so have I done on the present occasion.

When you gave your last cheer, and our noble vessel set her prow towards the Isle of Wight and "the Needles," her rapid motion was scarcely perceptible; and so long as we kept in the smooth waters of the Solent all looked bravely. We had,

to be sure, a motley crowd on board:—English, French, German, Spanish — governors, consuls, commissioners—traders, gentlemen, "loose fish," nondescripts—old men and young men; misses in their teens, ladies of age unmentionable—squalling children. Then we had dandy Albert ties; bristly beards, fierce moustaches; fast youngsters, grave *employés*. Here we were thrown higgledy-piggledy together, hardly any one as yet knowing his fellow passengers — the faces and figures all strange, with clearly a good sprinkling of both the queer and the uncouth.

We dined while our vessel was yet in smooth water. We retired to our berths, when we had exchanged an unruffled surface for a tempest-troubled sea. That very morning, a gale from the south-west had set in, right in our teeth. Quickly, as it met us, our passengers disappeared; and that night many rendered such an account of their dinner, as to make a suppression of the particulars the most becoming course.

As the gale hourly increased, and the waves rose higher and higher, the pitching and then the rolling of the vessel became very trying. Our commander, notwithstanding, read morning prayers

(Sunday 3rd), in the saloon, when we mustered a good many hearers, although only of the male sex.

The ladies, however, at last began gradually to creep out, as did many of our male passengers; but still the gale neither abated nor slackened for an instant; a dead head-wind, not allowing us, at any time, to get beyond three, and reducing us sometimes to one and a-half knots. The steamer too, being high in the water, rolled and pitched most desperately.

Then the noises we had on board!—the roar of the winds through the rigging, across the decks!—the creaking of the masts!—the thumping of the paddles!—the clanking of the hammers!—the subterranean thunder of the engine-room!—the crashing of plates, dishes, glass, furniture!—the involuntary rushings to-and-fro!—the slidings and tumblings of the unhappy passengers!—What a complication of horrid and incongruous sounds!—what a scene of utter confusion as a whole!

And thus it continued without any abatement, without a moment's lull, from Saturday the 2nd, to yesterday, Friday the 15th, at night, when—heaven be praised!—the south-wester came to a

close. During the thirteen days and nights of the gale, the dead-lights were of course never once opened; and even when shut, the sea forced its way into many of the cabins (H—'s included), and often drenched the luckless occupants, amid the tossings, and through the storm of the dark night.

The proper route was this:—Southampton to Bermuda; thence to Nassau, on to the Havana; from that to Cat Island (New Orleans), on to Vera Cruz (our own place of landing), and finally to Tampico.

To hold the course of the steamer for Bermuda, became, day by day, more difficult, and at length, after eight or nine days, the attempt to get there was given up as hopeless. Where were we to go? To Fayal?—to Madeira?—to Lisbon?—to Cadiz?—to Gibraltar? To Fayal, the most direct, we found we could *not* go—to that proposition the bullying south-wester said "No!" Madeira was next. On the thirteenth day, even to be able to accomplish this became problematical. Then must we have gone to the entrance to the Mediterranean. But the elements, worn out with their opposition to us,

gave way; squalls and heavy rains, and much lightning broke up the south-west gale, and yesterday, 15th, a clear sky dawned upon us—a favourable breeze* greeted us—sail was set—and every face beamed with joy. For the first time the deck was crowded by passengers; the rays of the bright sun danced gaily on the waters, and away went the gallant, although now weather-beaten* Avon, for the beautiful ocean speck, Madeira.

You might suppose that so long a continuance of all the wretchedness inseparable from a protracted gale might have soured some of the passengers, depressed others, and led the more pugnacious to quarrel, and even the best-tempered to complain.

Point du tout!—never saw I a merrier set than the company daily assembled in the saloon of the Avon during "the long gale." Not one quarrel have I witnessed—not one disagreeable

* One of our paddle-boxes was carried away. Our twelve pumps worked by steam, scarcely kept the ship free, such was the constant strain upon her timbers; and altogether no man could well have a more arduous and harassing (nay, at one time *dangerous* task) to perform, than had Captain Hast, during his memorable passage from Southampton to Madeira.

word have I heard among them. They have taken the greatest physical discomforts with the utmost philosophical serenity. At the same time our Commander has kept a good table; and both the cooking and the service, under the trying circumstances of the case, have been something wonderful.

As it may amuse you to have a lady's view of a "gale at sea," the first in her recollection, I will venture here to give you an extract of one of H—'s letters written from Madeira.

"At last there is some chance and some hope of our seeing land, and being able to give you an account of ourselves. We trust you may not be alarmed by reports of us as 'missing,' in a disagreeable newspaper paragraph, as we have been able to signalise one vessel 'homeward bound.' But in truth we have had a fortnight of the most dismally bad weather you can possibly imagine. Let us begin from our start.

"——— would tell you that we got a pretty good lodging in this great moving boarding-house, that is, we got one very good berth, which I have been taught to consider a spacious apartment, although at first I thought it a mere closet; and

the other is one of the 'general run,' smaller, and at the after-end of the ship, while mine is 'midships,' as they say here; consequently, the motion is much less felt in it. So here I am really quite comfortable, now that there is a possibility of sitting still.

"As soon as we got out of smooth water, the gale began; and I retired to my berth, not to leave it till the fifth day. Of course, I was sufficiently miserable during that time; and the weather was so bad, with so small a prospect of improvement, that we were quite 'disgusted with life,' the father regretting, over and over again, that he had allowed me to accompany him.

"As I lay in my berth, I overheard the passengers discussing the horrible weather, some indulging in the most gloomy prognostications—machinery giving way, no progress, coals falling short, etc. Then the rolling! almost impossible to keep in bed, while sleep was but little known to any of the passengers. Even *I* could not recover my faculties in that line for some time. I dreaded the pitch-dark nights, the tumbling about or upsetting of everything in my cabin; in fact, such a combina-

tion of troubles, as it is impossible for me to describe.

"Well, on Thursday, I ventured to get up; and after employing *two hours* in the difficult operation of dressing, bumped and bruised, stumbling along, I, at last, got to the saloon. There the father introduced me to a very pleasant family, with whom he had fraternised, Captain and Mrs. F—, one grown-up daughter, and seven younger children. None of the other ladies had as yet made their appearance in public; but, I believe, we have *now*, that is, within the last two days, caught a glimpse of all our fellow-passengers—on the whole, a very good set, and things going on as smoothly in the social department, as they have hitherto gone roughly in the elementary.

"The weather has never been cold, although we have been longer in reaching a warm climate than we had expected. The winds and the waves have changed our route for us; and I am not sorry for it, as we shall thus see more interesting places. We hope to make Madeira to-morrow, and there are many speculations as to quarantine, which we are dreading.

"Yesterday morning every one was beginning

fairly to lose patience, for all the day we hardly progressed a single mile in the right direction. The captain, whom we like very much, looked at last miserable, and few smiles were to be seen on the passengers' faces. The night before had been so boisterous, that no one had been able to sleep, and, consequently, all looked jaded and forlorn. The dinner-table was a scene of confusion, nothing seeming disposed to allow itself to be carved. The soup was not forthcoming, having all been spilt before it reached the saloon; gravies, wine, and 'Bass's' ale streamed over the cloth; whilst, every now and then, some one would suddenly retire from the scene of action, looking round in a scared manner, and not at all confident as to the whereabouts of his landing. All this was accompanied by a confusion of tongues and noises enough to make us doubt whether we had not got to some unheard-of region. It was difficult to continue any longer to view our situation in a ludicrous point of view. No laughter; but 'groans, not loud but deep,' were, on the thirteenth day, the only comments on the clattering fray. In the evening, however, a squall came on, with very heavy rain, which broke up the weather; and

next morning it was quite refreshing to hear the cheerful voices and see the improved looks, which a comparatively good night's rest, change of wind, and bright sky had produced. To-day has been very fine, and on Monday we expect to be cheered by the sight of the island of Madeira."

LETTER III.

THE PASSAGE FROM SOUTHAMPTON TO ST. THOMAS'S.

On board the "Avon,"
At Sea, 17th December, 1848.

BEFORE the dawn of day, all the objects and forms which surround us, blend into masses, in which one form is not to be distinguished from another. But as the light imperceptibly diffuses itself abroad, the figures gradually emerge from their chaotic jumble: every minute, some new feature is displayed; till at length, all is distinct to the view, and each separate object stands revealed to us, the unit of a whole — one component part of the general outline.

Of a similar kind is the process which takes place when you are brought into contact, suddenly and simultaneously, with a great variety of new faces and characters displayed to you for the first time. So it happened to us when we went on board the Avon. Between passengers and ship's

company, about a hundred and sixty sets of features to examine; men and women, of all nations, among the former; and among the latter, captain, officers, doctor, purser, engineers, stewards, cooks, baker, butcher, sailors, stokers and cabin boys! The first day all was a confused melée of human beings —scarcely one to be distinguished from another. As the dawn of observation and inspection broke, some distinct features began to be dimly visible. Day by day they assumed more individuality; and now we can see them with all the clearness of a broad, daylight view. The progressive acquaintance, which in such cases we open up with our fellow-beings, curiously illustrates the unceasing systematic inquisitiveness of our nature.

I wish to give you some definite view of life on board a transatlantic passage in a steam packet; because it is a life, or little interlude of life, every day becoming more general. I therefore propose to be somewhat minute, as well as analytical, in my observations on our passage from Southampton to Vera Cruz.

We have, one by one, then, and from time to time, come into contact with our fellow-travellers, and with the more prominent of those permanently

attached to the vessel; and they may be roughly recapitulated, thus:—

1st. The Captain, and his first, down to his fifth officer.

2. The Admiralty Agent (always a Lieut. R.N.), in charge of the mails.

3. The doctor and purser.

4. The chief engineer, and his subordinates.

5. The lady passengers.

6. The gentlemen passengers.

7. The chief steward, and stewardess.

8. The children, and family servants.

The gentlemen passengers, again, may be classified in a variety of ways. About 25 of them are English; 12 to 15 Spanish and Spanish American; 6 French, and 6 or 7 German and Continental. Then there are the following families:—

1. Capt.F.—, wife, 5 daughters, 3 sons, 2 servants	12
2. Mr. S., wife, 1 child, 1 servant - - -	4
3. Mr. L., wife, 2 children - - - - -	4
4. Mons. D., wife and child - - - -	3
5. Señor Z—, young wife, and Duenna - -	3
6. Mr. R. and daughter - - - - -	2
7. Señora B—, a lone Spanish lady, said to be married - - - - - -	1
In all	29,

Then we have on board, 1 Colonial Governor, 1 Chargé d'Affaires, 1 Consul-General, 1 Consul, 3 Captains, 4 Doctors (M.D.), and 3 Lieutenants.

Among our passengers we have certain characters more or less prominent, in some shape or other, viz. :—

1. The Commander of the Avon.
2. A Governor of one of H. M's Islands.
3. A German savant, knighted by H. M., and proceeding as British Consul to one of the Republics formed from an ex-colony.
4. A Lieutenant, R.N., in charge of the mails.
5. A Creole Chargé d'Affaires from his Republic to the Court of St. James's, returning, on leave, to his native country.

All these are on actual service.

And, among our general passengers, we have many pleasant individuals, as—

1. An agreeable and gifted Scotch physician, returning to Havana.
2. An opulent merchant, and proprietor of Jamaica.
3. A Captain in the 42nd Regiment.
4. A London fashionable.
5. A Lieutenant, R.N., going to join his ship on the West India Station.
6. A Lieutenant in a W. I. Regiment, going to re-join.

7. The doctor of a Royal Hospital, in one of our colonies.
8. A colonial barrister.
9. A rich French merchant of Mexico, originally of the army of the Empire.
10. A great traveller, though young, and scion of one of our leading Liverpool families.
11. A young German merchant and phrenologist, bound for Mexico.
12. An English merchant of Honduras.
13. } Two young Scotch gentlemen, commencing
14. } their career—one in Mexico, the other in the West Indies.
15. A lively and agreeable young French *Republican*, and some others.

Again, we have oddities, as—

1. The lone Spanish lady—fat, fair, and forty.
2. An old blind Dutch settler, bound for, and so going by the *sobriquet* of "Surinam."
3. An eccentric Swede, fond of the guitar.
4. A city trader, bound for Bermuda, and called "Cheapside."
5. A shaggy-bearded Frenchman, and
6. A Swiss Botanist, both constantly engaged in gauging the temperature of the sea.

Thus you may perceive that, if variety be charming, there is every chance of our being charmed; and I owe it to my fellow passengers

to say, that, each in particular, seems resolved to contribute, as far as possible, to the harmony and good feeling which pervades the whole ship.

I have here given you such general statistics as might be elaborated by a Registrar-General; but the following extracts will introduce you more specifically and more genially into "Life in a West India Steamer":—H—*loquitur*.

"Once more I can sit still on my chair; and the best use I can make of this novelty, which we enjoyed yesterday for the first time since we got out of Southampton-Water, is to write letters.

"Can it be possible that it is only a fortnight since I saw you? With you, no doubt, it has passed like any other; or perhaps you even say, 'What a short fortnight it seems since they went away!' But what with the monotony of misery of the first week, and what with the variety of people with whom I have already become acquainted on board, these two weeks seem to me to be the longest I ever spent in my life.

"I did not make my appearance till the Thursday after we came on board. The only ladies as yet in the saloon were Mrs. and Miss F—; and with the latter, who is young and amiable, as well as

very pretty, I have become quite intimate. I like her father also, Captain F—, who, although he mixes little in our very mixed company, is pleasant with us; and, in fact, the family is a great acquisition to me.. They have been much abroad; and having, not long ago, made a three months' passage, they are all (to their own great comfort), good sailors.

"We have another pleasant fellow-passenger in Sir R— S—, who is a German, with a very *klüg* expression in his eyes; and they tell me he is scientific in his pursuits. He goes out as a British Consul to a little republic in one of the West India islands; and, under reminiscences of Germany, we have become the best of friends. On learning I was disappointed that the packet boasted not of a library, he lent me two or three interesting volumes, a treat where such were so scarce.

"I cannot say very much about our fellow passengers, as I am just *beginning* to become acquainted with them. Of the ship's officials, I only know the captain and the doctor: the first is a quiet, gentlemanly man, of pleasing aspect and manners. The weather, however, has hardly

permitted my seeing him, except at dinner. The doctor is very much inclined to be sociable, and is a good deal with us. He keeps us all merry when he makes his appearance, looking much more the sailor than the doctor; and he certainly is an acquisition, from his good humour, and his evident desire to do all he can to keep up our spirits. One of the most amusing persons in our village of Avon is old Mr. S—, the Admiralty Agent. He, too, often keeps us in merriment, by his own peculiar eccentricities and amusing ways. He is quite a gentleman of the old school; and all the young men delight in getting him to tell some of his naval adventures, which he does with great animation, though, sailor-like, somewhat inattentive to the little niceties of language in expressing his feelings. Withal, he is a warm-hearted, well-informed, clever man, with a great deal of fun and amusing talk. Captain F— is a remarkably pleasant person, and we like him much. Then there are Mr. S. and his lady. He is an opulent Jamaica planter; and she is young, pleasing, and frank in her manners. She was very ill for a length of time; but since she has made her appearance, I have been very much with her. They have got a little

girl, about two years old, who is very engaging and the pet of the ship. Mr. S—'s cabin, and my own adjoining, open into a sort of passage or gallery, which surrounds the great sky-light, and it is the most cheerful part of the vessel; for *from* it you can look down on the saloon, and *in* it hangs the barometer; so that we have the benefit of hearing all the conversation going on about the weather, as well as the good mornings, and tender inquiries as to how one's friends have slept. Then, during the day, we get chairs, and sit in the gallery, holding a sort of drawing-room. The only other English lady we have, is a Mrs. L—, who has a husband in delicate health, two small children, and nurse; so that she has enough to do, poor soul.

"Then there are the noisy young men; and first comes Mr. M—, a lieutenant in the navy, with a good expression of countenance, merry, and amusing. I have only spoken once to him; but I dare say we shall soon get to know more of each other. Then there are two young Scotchmen, Mr. C—, and Mr. H—, who, though quiet, fraternise with this set. Another, Mr. G—, called the "good-natured dandy." He goes about with

a glass hanging from one of those round glazed sailor's hats, and sticking in his eye. When any vessel was to be seen, he would go on deck with an opera-glass! which always created a laugh: but he is the very essence of good-nature, takes nothing amiss, and joins in the fun. Then we have a quieter sort of these younger men: Mr. L—, a tremendous chess-player, beating every person here, quiet and gentlemanly, whose society I like much. For some years he has been, and still continues, travelling for pleasure; and he has been in all sorts of places, principally in India and China. Captain D—, of the 42nd, I have not yet spoken to. Next we have Lieutenant C—, who does not play cards; and so generally comes to talk with us "lone women" in the evenings. There is a fat Spanish woman who sleeps next door to him, and whom he abominates; whence she is called Mrs. C—. I know little, as yet, of our middle-aged and elderly passengers, saving old Dr. F—, who, though very deaf, is most agreeable and entertaining, and with whom I have got up an intimacy. He is returning to his family at Havana.

Having gone pretty well through our list of

English passengers, I will not detain you much with our foreigners. With some exceptions, I do not think much of them. There is one Spanish couple, recently married, going to the Havana; and another, with a baby, returning to Mexico. We have a good many other Spaniards, of whom I know nothing, although the father, of course, congregates with them. Among the Frenchmen, the principal character is a young man, good-looking, with a beard *à la Cavaignac*, whence his *sobriquet* is that general's name, and he is known by no other. For ten days he never came out of his cabin; but, though complaining of being ill, always ate a good dinner, handed in to him from the table by a *compatriote*. Speaking, however, very loud at last, and merrily, the captain told him he must *come out* to dinner, which thenceforward he did. Of Germans, after Sir R—, we have a Hamburgher, Mr. D—, very amusing. His mania for phrenology gave him at first no peace, till he explained to each and every one their bumps, which created a great deal of merriment; both because some looked so frightened and *convicted* by several of his discoveries, and because he gave them in such quaint, though very good, English.

Then there is Herr L—, of whom I know little, although we found he had a letter of introduction for us. With the remainder of the passengers I am unacquainted; but I think I have given you a pretty good list of the inhabitants of the floating community in the "Avon."

18th.—The poor Bermuda people are, as the "fast" men here say, "regularly sold," as we shall not see that island. We are now at anchor in Funchal-Bay; and, alas! nothing more shall we see of the island than we do at this present: for we are placed in quarantine, on account of the cholera, which, they say, is raging dreadfully in England, although I am sure I saw nothing of it. So here we shall be all day *looking* at this old-fashioned town of Funchal from the vessel; but that is all. I suppose our present letters will arrive in a pretty *pickle*, for they insist on putting every thing into vinegar.

All this morning it has rained; but now the weather is fair and lovely, although *excessively warm!* The sight from the deck, however, is very fine. All the houses look so white, and the steep, abrupt ascent from the sea-side renders the scene very picturesque. Such beautiful hills! and so

lovely a sky!—a day such as we seldom have in England in the middle of July. Yesterday was also very fine. We had prayers in the morning, and then we remained for hours on deck. In the evening it was still delicious and warm, with beautiful star-light.

This morning the heavy rain prevented us from going on deck to see the approach of the Avon to the roadstead of Madeira; and all the best windows aft being taken, Mr. and Mrs. S—, our young German friend Sir R—, and I, led by the doctor, went to the fore part of the vessel, near to the butcher's shop. There we not only had a famous place on the second deck to see the approach, but the doctor afterwards, offering to be showman, took us all over the hitherto unseen *ateliers*, holes, and corners, and unimagined places of the steamer, keeping us in a roar of laughter with his merry explanations of the whole.

I hope our stormy weather is now at an end. When we came on board, I asked my father the use of the dead lights; and he said—"O, they are horrible things, put down in stormy weather to prevent the water coming in; but I hope we shall not often see them." Yet, till Saturday,

they were never unshipped; and, thanks to the thirteen days' gale, we have earned the pleasant notoriety of having made the longest passage to Madeira of any of these steamers up to the present time. Still, considering the disadvantages we have had to contend with, we have, on the whole, done very well, and the passengers are unanimous in their praises of Captain Hast. We now expect a continuance of the beautiful weather we at present enjoy—weather which renders it difficult for me to believe that, perhaps at this moment, you sit shivering by the fire.

LETTER IV.

THE PASSAGE FROM SOUTHAMPTON TO ST. THOMAS CONTINUED.

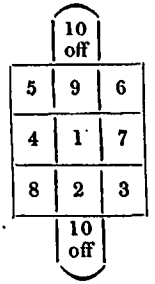
On board the Forth, off Santo Domingo,
Thursday, January 4, 1849.

A LARGE outward-bound steam packet, full of passengers, forms, as my statistics have shown, a complete epitome of cosmopolitan life. You have a sprinkling of various nations, of every class in society, of every diversity of talent, education, and acquirement; finally, of almost every language spoken in Europe.

Our manner of life on board is this:—At half-past eight, A.M., a bell is rung to warn sluggards that the breakfast hour is at hand. At nine, the breakfast bell itself is rung, when, (now the weather is good), almost all muster, and a truly substantial meal is discussed. Then at noon comes luncheon; and at four, P.M., an ample dinner is served. At half-past six we have

tea, which concludes the somewhat cumbersome eating and drinking operations of the day.

Among the various pursuits, busy and idle, with which our passengers anxiously seek a riddance of their time, a curious game, called "sea billiards," has been very attractive for our "fast" young men, and even for some of the more staid among us. A figure is chalked out on the deck, thus:—



and two pair of round flat pieces of wood, about four inches in diameter, and 1¼ inch in thickness, are hurled smoothly, on the flat side, along the deck by the players, stationed about twenty paces from the board, or "square;" and he who, in his throws, first scores 100, by his success in placing his *missile* in the respective divisions, according to the written number, wins the game. The implement, however, must not be on a line, and if it

lands in the "10 off," that number is deducted from the score; while the antagonists may knock each other out, as is done at bowls, when they can. Thus, my disc, for instance, lies in division 1, my opponent may chance to knock me into division 9, and he remain in 1, by which, of course, I gain 8.

Another less quiet game, called "monkey," well known at sea, was played, till the hard knocks received put an end to it. The "monkey" gets a rope, which is fastened to a spar some feet above him, round his waist, and then leaning forward on his chest, and giving his body an impetus by two or three paces on the deck (all he can do), he swings in the air, without being able to steady his course. Around him, on the deck, are his assailants, armed with knotted silk handkerchiefs, striking at him; and he, with a similar weapon, endeavours to hit some one, who thereupon becomes the "monkey." The difficulty is to guide the swing, so as not to strike against surrounding objects. An intrepid "monkey" is, moreover, exposed to severe blows or contusions, and the game altogether is a very rude species of gymnastics.

Music and dancing, when the weather has permitted, have formed leading amusements on board

the Avon. The Terpsichoreans were first set in motion by the violin of the versatile and good-natured Captain D—; while Cavaignac has gathered large audiences round him, to listen to his Italian *arias* and French *chansons*, both which he sings magnificently.

The least agreeable part of the day, I presume, for the ladies is after tea, when whist sets in, and they are consequently left much to themselves.

To return to my narrative. Our unexpectedly devious course, as stated at the conclusion of my second letter, led us to the island of Madeira. On the 16th of December, we were two hundred and fifty miles from it. On Sunday, the 17th, a beautiful day, we all assembled at prayers, that is, all our Protestant passengers and ship's company, with some lookers-on of the Catholics. Captain Hast read the service well, and our purser (Mr. C—) made an excellent clerk. Mr. L— our doctor, laid aside, for the nonce, his joyous laugh, and, with grave look and sonorous voice, accompanied Mr. C— in the responses.

On Monday, the 18th, after a fine run of the two previous days, we came to anchor in Funchal Bay, close in-shore, about half-past ten, A.M.,

obtaining, as we approached it, a close view of the charming and picturesque island. It may be enough to say, that those on board, who now saw Madeira for the first time, found no adequate terms to express their delight with so novel, so attractive a scene, as that upon which they gazed, while they stood on the deck of our fine steamer.

Many were our plans as to how we were to spend our day on shore; but, like many other well-imagined schemes "of mice and men," ours were destined never to be realised. The health-boat came off.

"How d'ye do, captain?" said the officer of the boat.

"Quite well, I thank you."

"How long are you from Southampton?"

"Sixteen days."

"Any case of cholera on board?"

"Not one."

"Any case of sickness?"

"Not a single case."

"Any one confined to bed?"

"No one."

"Have you a clean bill of health?"

"Yes."

"O then," said the sapient health-officer, unconscious of his amusing *non sequitur*,—"O THEN, you are in quarantine!"

And in quarantine we remained, spell-bound to the Avon. The sickly-looking Funchalians would not be infected with our fresh, rosy, breezy health, which had increased upon us every day as we braved the Bay of Biscay, and encountered the gales of the broad Atlantic.

I was especially annoyed myself, not to be allowed to land. I was in sight of the island, after a lapse of thirty-five years between my first and my present visit. I had a vivid recollection of all its beauties; and I was pluming myself on my abilities as a cicerone for H— on the occasion. But O these stupid and absurd quarantine laws! How incomprehensible it is, that benighted rulers of civilised nations still bow their heads to this most senseless relic of our barbarous times!

We took in coals, and a complete supply of fresh provisions and live stock. We made telescopic observations of the villa-dotted hill—I might say, mountain in front—sighing in vain for a walk among orange-groves and vineyards.

At one P.M. on Tuesday, the 19th, we weighed

anchor, and majestically swept out of the bay, and along the sea-board of the beauteous, but inhospitable, isle.

From this time we had fine weather up to Christmas-day; but that no pleasurable festival for us, brought rain in torrents; hatches fastened down, and skylights closed. Towards evening the weather cleared up; the wind was still fair; and on the 26th we were scudding away, "all right," once more.

Our route was now completely changed. Instead of Bermuda and Nassau to Havana, it was to that port by Madeira, St. Thomas's, Porto Rico, and Jamaica. The alteration was agreeable, from the greater range of intermediate islands which we were thus to visit. I had heard much of the pretty islands of St. Thomas and Porto Rico; and, of course, I was also anxious to see poor old Jamaica, which, by all accounts *here*, is now really on its last legs.

On Friday, the 29th, enjoying the same splendid weather, which, with only slight interruptions, we had brought with us from Madeira, we found we were within three days' sail of St. Thomas; so we set about carrying into effect two projects,

which had occupied our thoughts during the two previous days. One, originating with H—, was, to give a miscellaneous concert; the other was, to present Captain Hast with a letter of thanks and a small present, as a testimony of the esteem of his passengers.

On Friday, then, there issued from H—'s cabin the following announcement:—

"It is respectfully announced, that a grand instrumental and vocal concert will be given in the Royal Avon Saloon, on Saturday, the 30th of December, which will be supported by the following

"EMINENT ARTISTES.

"Instrumental—Sig. D—, the celebrated flautist.
" Sig. H—, on the Boehm flute.
" Mr. L—, Mus. Doc., on the violin.

"Vocal—Mons. D—, the unrivalled French baritone.
" Herr D—, the great German tenor.
" Mr. R—, the renowned Scotch singer.

"Engagements are pending with other *artistes* of great merit. Full particulars will be duly announced, and programmes issued on the morning of the performance."

These were accordingly drawn up, and, after many alterations and improvements, finally adopted; making them a veritable facsimile of the innumerable programmes of concerts, which, in "Parts I. and II.," one sees every "season" in the music shops and newspapers of London.

The mornings of Friday and Saturday were given to rehearsals. We named a "Committee of Taste" to fit up the "Saloon," and to provide refreshments. We determined that the whole expense should be borne by the *English* gentlemen passengers only; and all being thus disposed, the audience was called to the concert at seven o'clock precisely.

The saloon was so well arranged, that all the listeners were comfortably seated in front of the performers: the orchestra was in the centre, and all heard equally well. Our audience was composed of about seventy persons. As to the concert itself, I can safely avow that it went off with an *eclât*, never exceeded in the Hanover Square Rooms. The flute performances were exquisite. "Cavaignac" sang in fine voice. Our duets, trios, and choruses, all went famously; and Captains H— and D—'s comic songs, were decided

hits, and irresistibly encored. Nothing went wrong; and Herr L—'s leger-de-main, as well as some volunteered by Sir R—, created great merriment as well as surprise, so well were they done. Captain Hast assured every one that nothing at all like the Avon concert had ever been got up in any one of the Royal Mail steamers; while the delighted steward affirmed that he had seen nothing of the kind in twenty years of the Foreign Packet Service. The concert closed with "God save the Queen," in solo parts and full chorus.

Our next demonstration was the presentation of a letter of thanks to Captain Hast, with a little purse containing twenty-five guineas. On Saturday, a meeting was held to arrange preliminaries; the letter to Captain H— was agreed upon, as well as the inscription for the proposed small piece of plate, to be purchased; and Miss F— and H— volunteered to work the purse, to be ready on Monday: a very pretty purse it was, although, some alleged, not quite heavy enough.

The passengers proceeded to assemble in the saloon, and Captain F— taking the head seat, Captain Hast was introduced by Sir R. S—. Our chairman spoke with tact, and Captain Hast made a feeling and appropriate reply.

Before winding up the first part of our voyage, I will give you some extracts of H—'s diary, from Madeira, as illustrative, a little farther, of "life on board a West India steamer."

"18th December, 1848.—We sent off from Madeira, this morning, a good many letters, which occupied us till a late hour last night. I propose, now and then, to take up the "journal" style, and, from time to time, to send you what I have ready. It is not so easy to write now as it was last night; for we are no longer at anchor, but again tossing about, though now in a somewhat more *piano* manner.

"The weather has been so fine to-day, that I have enjoyed it throughout on deck. The sad ceremony of consigning our poor cow, (which died from injuries received during the storm,) to a watery grave, was performed this morning. Its place was supplied, at Madeira, by two native cows, which were amongst the numerous purchases our captain was obliged to make. As no one was allowed to land at Madeira, every thing wanted was brought off in shore-boats; and it was amusing enough to see the variety of articles presented to our view. Caged Canary birds,

feather-flowers, straw hats and bonnets, queer shoes, and fruits of every kind, were among the purchases made by the passengers.

"Friday, 22nd.—To-day I have been reading Andersen's 'Two Baronesses.' The days are getting so much longer, that we were in time, after dinner, to see the sun set, which was beautiful. After admiring it, I sat down beside the dear deaf doctor, and spoke to him through his trumpet. While thus engaged, a proposal to dance was made; and soon there was quite a large party assembled, 'on polking thoughts intent.' Captain D— was found to be a willing performer on the violin; and to the 'Annen Polka,' played by him on a fiddle of doubtful reputation, the ball was opened. We kept it up with considerable spirit, 'totally regardless' of occasional bumps or slides; till, at last, after a vigorous *deux-temps*, we were obliged to rest, and recover ourselves by promenading. In this way I had got almost to the other extremity of the vessel, with my partner, when we heard the sounds as of a vocal performance. 'Rushing madly' back, we found 'Cavaignac' singing, to a delighted audience, the baritone air from 'Nino.' He has decidedly

a fine voice, and sings remarkably well for an amateur. He has been a great deal in Italy, is a member of the Philharmonic Society of Bordeaux (whence he comes), and is '*passionné pour la musique.*' Next we got our *German* to sing a romance, a pretty little thing about Lebewohl, which he gave very nicely. The evening closed with tea, talk, and cards, and other amusements, diversified by two songs from 'Cavaignac,' very well given.

"Christmas Day.—Yesterday we had prayers. In the afternoon it got windy, and rained a great deal: a dreadful night, the rolling again as bad as ever; passengers sick, etc. etc. This morning the heat was oppressive, every one shut up on account of the rain and the sea, both very heavy. We were all, if not in an unchristian, at least in an unchristmas-like mood, and made the usual congratulations with woe-begone looks, fearing, as we did, a return of our first gale, and a repetition of former miseries. We had, in the meantime, a regular Christmas dinner, of which several of our friends were unable to partake, having retired to their berths, there to be merry after a fashion!

"We thought of you all, as no doubt you did of

us, imagining us very near Havana. I hope next Christmas will find us in dear old England again, or if not so, at any rate not upon the high seas.

"After dinner, there was a joke got up about a *sham* misletoe, in the shape of an old cabbage, which was hung from the balcony over the saloon, and of course caused a good deal of merriment. No dancing *this* evening; every one inclined to be slow.

"Tuesday, 26th.—High wind, but in our favor, so we don't mind it much; otherwise a fine day. One of the middies, Mr. M—, has presented me with a little water-colour sketch of the 'Avon' in the gale, which Mr. C— said would keep me in mind of some very miserable days; but, I added, of some very pleasant ones also.

"Thursday, 28th.—Yesterday was a beautiful day again. I sat all the morning with Miss F— under the awning. We read a little, and talked a great deal. We had much amusement with Herr D— (the phrenologist), as the fat Spanish lady got him to examine her bumps and explain them to her. In the evening, we had our dance again, but found it rather warm, as we had now entered the tropics.

"Saturday, 30th.—Yesterday and to-day we were very busy preparing for a concert, which took place this evening. I send you a programme. It was on a very grand scale, I assure you. The best thing of all was Captain D—'s song of 'The Ladies' Man,' which was excellent. He is a very gentlemanly man, full of quiet fun, which constantly finds vent for itself, under the gravest aspect. He is very musical; and the flute duets which he and Mr. H— played, were well executed. Then the captain's song, 'The Hurricane,' was very good; and our famous French baritone came out in grand style. Between the parts, there were some amusing *tricks*, executed by Herr L— and Sir R. S—, so that altogether it was good fun, and every one seemed to enjoy the evening.

"Beside the musical rehearsals, arrangements were made to-day for presenting the captain with a letter of thanks, and a purse, to which all the passengers subscribed. Miss F— and I, according to our offer, have been very busy *knitting the purse.*

"Monday, January 1st.—A happy new year to you all! Yesterday and to-day have been disagreeable; rain and great heat. Miss F— and I

were busy all the forenoon at our purse, which we finished in good time; and at three, Captain F— presented it, and its contents, to Captain Hast. This evening we had the most glorious sunset I ever saw, assuredly something worth seeing. All were collected on deck, and declared they had never witnessed a finer sight. When it had quite faded away, the dancing began, and the evening passed as usual. We had seen land in the afternoon, and therefore all the conversation was of St. Thomas, and the parting there with some of our fellow passengers.

"Tuesday.—This morning I got up at six o'clock to see the entrance to St. Thomas, which is remarkably pretty. The town, also, looks well from the sea. The little bay is formed by a semicircle of hills, and the town is built on three of them, while on two other eminences are the ruins of a castle, and of adjacent buildings, once the stronghold of Buccaneers. At St. Thomas we were ordered to leave the Avon, and to proceed in the Forth, to our different destinations. You cannot think how sorry we were to hear this,—to leave the poor old 'Avon,' shattered as she was, to go to a new ship, and to part from all our

friends, particularly from our especial favourite Captain Hast, who had been so kind, to go among strangers! There was much grumbling on the occasion; and then we were obliged to set about packing, moving the luggage, etc.; in fact, it was a scene of confusion once more.

"However, we hurried through the needful operations, being *determined* to go on shore; and accordingly, at twelve, we got boats, and with Mr. and Mrs. S—, the two Misses F—, Mr. M—, and Mr. L—, we set off on our expedition. I was very much astonished to find the town poor-looking, dirty, and unpaved. There was a number of 'blackies' going about in holiday costume (for they were keeping up the new year festivities), selling all sorts of things, and making an immense hubbub!

"We went to the ice-house, where we enjoyed ourselves much. We took a walk through the town, making a few purchases; returned to the ice-house; and fancying it was then time to return to our floating prison, we got into boats, and rowed towards it. We met, however, coming off, other parties, who informed us we should not sail till four, P.M., and that a gun fired would warn us on

board. Availing ourselves of this reprieve, we returned. We went to the hotel—one of the best, they say, in the West Indies—and they showed us into a fine ball-room (opening upon a large corridor), where we had our dinner, which we much enjoyed. Discovering an old piano, I played a polka, and while Lieutenant M— and Miss F— were whirling round to it, a case of Cinderella ensued. The gun was fired—a rush and scuffle for bonnets, etc., took place, and *bon grè, mal grè,* off we went, once more. We found all on board was bustle; we took a hasty leave of our friends of the Avon, regretting no loss so much as that of her very kind and most gentlemanly commander.

"We got under weigh at half-past four, a beautiful afternoon, and calm sea, receiving a loud cheer from the Avon, heartily re-echoed from the Forth. In the evening, we had our dance as usual; and a discovery was made that we had a *professional* fiddler on board, who, though small, does very well; and Captain D— is superseded. The evenings are now something quite lovely—moonlight, and such a sky!

We expect to reach Jamaica on Saturday, when we shall lose nearly all our most agreeable fellow-passengers, and then Dulness will have her reign. Meantime, the captain here, and all the officers, are most civil and obliging. The doctor is an amusing and gentleman-like person."

LETTER V.

THE PASSAGE FROM ST. THOMAS'S TO VERA CRUZ.

On board the "Forth," 350 miles from Havana, 9th January, 1851.

THE first day of the year set in with rain; and every place on board being then shut up, the smell was close and disagreeable: the heat was suffocating. But the weather cleared up as the day advanced; and in the evening we had one of those glorious sunsets which at once astonish and delight the first visitors of a tropical clime. No pencil which ever obeyed the sublime inspirations of the highest genius, could transfer to canvass the splendour and gorgeous colours of a tropical sunset, such as that which we witnessed on the first evening of the year; so I must leave to your own imagination the grandeur and beauty of the bright, but evanescent, scene, which is better than dimming and obscuring all its glories in a vain

attempt to shadow them forth in the meagre colourings of language.

We got into the pretty bay of St. Thomas's about six A.M., Tuesday, the 2nd of January; and when we anchored within three-quarters of a mile of the shore, heavy showers again unfortunately commenced. We saw another steamer in the roadstead; and judging that it waited our arrival, previously to sailing for England, we began to rejoice that our good luck had so opportunely sent us into St. Thomas's.

We were destined to be wofully undeceived. In a quarter of an hour, we learned from Captain Sturdee, who commanded the "Forth," the steam-packet in question, that the one bound for England, despairing of our arrival, had sailed the *night before;* that he himself had waited five days at Bermuda for us; and that *now* the "Avon" must proceed no farther on her original voyage. At Havana so strict a quarantine had been established, that no vessels direct from England were even allowed to touch there: that, accordingly, the "Forth," which had been on inter-colonial service, was waiting to take the mails and the passengers forward; and that the poor "Avon,"

and poor Captain Hast, were to replace Captain Sturdee on disagreeable colonial duty.

Surprised and disappointed at this unlooked-for change, we were nevertheless constrained to leave the "Avon"; but meantime, the day being fine, we proceeded to spend a couple of hours on shore.

Making up a party in three of the shore-boats which had come off, each manned by two "darkies," one rowing, and the other sitting idly in the bows, we landed at a little jetty, on which stood a group of the dingy denizens of St. Thomas's, male and female. The previous, or New-Year's, day had been kept as a high holiday, which many were careering into the next, with an easily understood disinclination, on the part of the *ladies*, to doff their gaudy garments too soon.

Amid the chattering and laughing of these light-hearted beings, and walking along a row of pretty cocoa-nut trees, on which, in great abundance, hung their fruit, we presently found ourselves in the town. After regaling ourselves with ices and sherry-cobblers, we perambulated the principal street, unpaved (of course), irregular, and uncomfortable. The "stores" and shops were mostly Yankee or Danish. We were much

amused by some of the Negresses and Mulattoes who came round us, trying to sell their wares. One very smart young lady, "a yellow gal," such as the serenaders at St. James's theatre might have taken for a study, wore, in ostentatious display, much finery, bedizened with many nick-nacks, and was full of lively and ready talk. The damsel had five plain gold rings on her marriage-finger, though she assured us she was single; and, indeed, the number of her other trinkets, and the care with which she was dressed, certainly indicated that she was rather bent on conquest, than that she had already five lords and masters.

Time having been given us to *dine* on shore, we had an excellent repast at the truly comfortable hotel they have here, with abundance of good claret, a bottle of Madeira, and dessert: the charge for the dinner was the extremely moderate one of nine dollars for eight persons. In the wide corridor, the great heat was alleviated by the sea breeze, and pleasant we found it, after our hot walk, here to sit down and rest.

After dinner, when we had got to music and dancing, and were in high glee—Boom! went the

warning gun, to recall us on board; and, for a moment, we were electrified. Hurry ensued. Our bill was bawled for; down stairs flew the ladies, tying their bonnet-strings as they descended, and, in double post haste, half afraid of being left behind, we got into our boats waiting at the jetty.

St. Thomas, you know, is a Danish settlement, and has long been a striking instance of the good fruits of Free Trade. Created a free port, it became, as such, an entrepôt; and although in itself a poor place, it soon grew into a rich and a prosperous island.

The Forth was ready to get under weigh when we reached her. We bid an affectionate farewell to our Avon friends, particularly to Captain Hast, leaving behind the following passengers, who remained either in the Avon, or at St. Thomas's :—

Mr. G—, bound for his family property, in Barbadoes.
Señor B— and two *Attachés*, bound for St. Domingo.
Mr. D—, he of the black beard.
Mr. L—, the Bermuda slop-seller; the poor old Dutch planter, "Surinam;" a Swede, from St. Kitt's; and
Mr. M—, the quiet and unobtrusive, but very sensible lawyer of Nassau.

Our greatest loss here was Mr. G—, for his good nature and many estimable qualities had made him a universal favourite on board.

We sailed at half-past four, P.M.* With splendid moonlight weather, we came abreast of San Juan de Porto Rico, at two A.M., on Wednesday, and, to save time, Captain Sturdee sent the mails in by a boat, which returned at six, when we proceeded on our passage. We had a fine view of the castle and fortifications of San Juan (or St. John's, as generally called), which are equally strong and handsome. They stand on a promontory; and the land thus running out peninsular-wise, a strait is formed, by which you run up to the inlet or harbour of San Juan; while the town, lying on the inner declivity, is covered from the sea-view. The island itself is very beautiful, well cultivated, thickly populated (comparatively with the other islands), and, I fancy, from being left so much to itself, the most populous settlement (except Cuba) in the West Indies. It belongs to Spain, and presents the anomaly, although it constitutes a highly

* On applying to my waistcoat pocket for my watch, I recollected, when too late, that I had left it hanging in my cabin, on board the Avon.

interesting and significant fact, of being almost entirely cultivated by the free labour of whites, of whom there are three hundred thousand, with something under fifty thousand slaves. This has arisen from the colony having been originally a penal settlement, whence the white population is mostly composed of descendants of Spanish convicts. During a great part of the day, we sailed along the coast, obtaining fine views of its rich, diversified, and romantic scenery.

On Saturday morning, the 6th, after a delightful run, (I speak not of the intermediate places at which we did not touch,) we made Jamaica, once so rich and renowned as the chief West India possession of Great Britain, now so notorious for its lamentable decay. The people at home view the Jamaica planters as prodigal sons, who have wasted their substance in riotous living, far distant from their own homes — reckless of their own affairs; and who must, therefore, take the consequences of their folly and profusion. The Jamaica "Interest" accuse John Bull of having deserted the children of his first love, for the sake of the family which has grown up, since he wedded that

low, vulgar, but imperious creature, Madam Free Trade. Loud are the complaints — bitter the criminations and recriminations on both sides; and some people think that, in this, as in many similar cases, the reason and equity of the question are, more or less, removed from the two extremes —that, if each party conceded something, matters might begin to mend. I myself, however, profess the opinion, after hearing much debate on the question, that, if there were no absenteeism—if the estates were cultivated with science and economy, by their own resident proprietors; they would not suffer from the want of labour; neither would they require protection.

In the meantime, having no wish to pronounce dogmatically, seeing the problem is *not* of such *very* easy solution as some folks fancy, I proceed to say that at one, P.M., Saturday, the 6th, we hove to, or stopped our engines off Port Royal, whence the panorama is imposing, having the Blue Mountains in the back ground. Port Royal, on a tongue of low land, is a naval station, and, as our guide book* says, "is formed by an inlet of

* Written by Mr. Osborne, and authorised by the Royal West India Steam Packet Company.

the sea, between the main land, and a long sand bank, called the Palisades, on the point of which Port Royal stands."

Thence to Kingston, we had about six miles to sail across the harbour; and, as we approached the rough, dirty, rude little quays which line the shore, and are supported by coarse wooden piles, nothing could be more unpromising than the look we here got of the town. The streets appeared to be straight and regular, but narrow, filthy, and unpaved, and the houses dilapidated. However, the quay, or shore part, may be considered, I suppose, the Wapping of Kingston. The guide-book gives, or borrows, a very glowing description of the surrounding country; but I fear it is, in part, a representation of what the thing was, not of what it is. The grandeur and dark sterility of the mountains remain; but the "extensive cane-fields" have too generally disappeared; while the "pride of cultivation" is fast sinking into apathetic abandonment of the finest lands. This is truly lamentable; but I cannot help thinking that, till the Jamaica proprietors dismiss from their minds all hope of what has become (right or wrong), the *ignis fatuus* of protection—that, till they

throw off all dependence on extraneous aid which they will never receive—; they will scarcely make a stand against what appears to be at present a too palpably impending ruin. "God helps them," says the old proverb, "who help themselves"; and I think the planters would do well to lay this indubitable truth to heart.

On the Forth getting up to its own station, we found the wharf crowded by dirty-looking negroes, who were the porters, carters, coacheys, and boatmen of the place. No police—no order; and the parties, who landed with their luggage, were themselves lugged about with the most unceremonious freedom, by the "darkies." It was highly amusing to us, who remained on deck, to see how they hustled Capt. F— and Lieut. C—, as they were coming on board; the whole scene giving us a very low opinion of the municipal management of Kingston.

We almost all dined on board; and we were told that, the only thing we could do in the evening, was to take a drive to "Upper Camp," the barracks of the town; where two of our fellow-passengers were now to take up their residence—Lieutenant C—, and Ensign R—, both of the 1st West India regiment.

Our agreeable friend Mr. S—, who has not only large estates in Jamaica, but is head of an eminent mercantile house there, was at hand to order for us what we wanted. So, after dinner, a very good turn out—a phaeton and pair, with a very decent looking "darkie" as driver, being in readiness for us, we took a kind farewell of Mr. and Mrs. S—, with mutual assurances of renewing our acquaintance in England, should we happily get back to our native land. H— and Miss F— got into the phaeton, Miss E— F— and I took our places beside our coachman, on an ample dickey, and away we drove through the streets of Kingston.

As we advanced, we found some tolerable houses in the town; but still the appearance of the whole was poor, and every here and there very desolate; for, wherever a house had been burned down, had fallen down, or had been left unfinished, there it remained in its ruins: and of such houses, or carcases of houses, we saw very many. Not one street is paved; and a superficial sandy soil, overlaying a clay stratum, with innumerable deep ruts and holes, formed a rough, unequal, and uneasy carriage-way. Pigs, blackies, and brownies, young and old, large and small; rum-shops, and queer-

(or, if you like, *rum*-) looking stores, were mixed up in the streets with the better sort of houses; and, altogether, I should pronounce Kingston, or the chief town of our chief West India colony, a sad disgrace to our colonial character.

As we approached the outskirts, the aspect of affairs improved; and once fairly out of the town, the scene gradually became pretty and picturesque. A singular conformation of the hills, a rough and broken surface, with a peculiar red tinge of the soil, gave them a pleasing and novel aspect; and the villas, or "penns," which lay scattered on either side of us, lent beauty to the drive. These villas are not kept with the care and elegance of our velvet-lawn country retreats in England; but the shrubs and trees and flowers which everywhere abound, display all the luxuriance and beauty of a tropical clime. The enclosures, too, composed here of the orange, and there of the aloe, although to me "familiar as household gods," always strike the stranger as giving a "foreign" aspect to the scene.

A spacious area has been cleared away for the barracks; and they look airy, roomy, and healthful, commanding a fine view of the harbour. We

were told that, after all, they might have been better placed. After driving round them, and seeing young R— in his mess-room, we returned by a different and more sequestered, but still extremely pretty, route (the distance being only two miles), and we drew up at Mrs. Bogle's boarding-house, a comfortable-looking place, where Captain F— had fixed on staying till he could get off to his own head-quarters. We remained for an hour and a half; and we took our leave with the feeling that we had seldom fallen in with a more estimable family than that of Captain F—.

We now hastened on board, to turn our thoughts to England; and to assure you all, through our letters, of our constant reminiscences of home. We were to sail at six in the morning; so we had heavy epistolary labours to accomplish in a limited time.

We were regretting, as we drove to the quay, that some mischance had denied us the pleasure of saying good-bye to Captain D—; but as we entered the gateway, we heard some one hallooing after us, and presently up came our friend. He had left his party, to bid H— and myself farewell; so we shook hands, amid many expressions of

mutual regret at parting. He was, with justice, looked on as the *facilis princeps* of our passengers.

These being now very much diminished in number, I got transferred to a better cabin, where I sat down, accompanied and assisted by H—, to write letters for England. At half-past twelve, she retired. I closed at half-past two in the morning; went on deck to breathe the balmy air, to take my last view of the scenery, now made doubly serene by a soft, clear moonlight, reflected back from the bosom of the placid sea. The murmuring ripple of the waves fell mournfully on my ear, and led my mind to a somewhat melancholy contemplation of the vicissitudes of life, and to the wonderful variety of scene and fortune which the course of time offers to the restless mind of man. In such mood, I sat on deck for an hour; and, after retiring, ere I could bring sleep to refresh my weary frame in my crib, the bustle of getting under weigh began. The dog-watch sounded four bells, and as at last I fell into an uneasy slumber, I felt that we were once more steaming on the Atlantic.

LETTER VI.

PASSAGE FROM ST. THOMAS'S TO VERA CRUZ CONTINUED.

At Sea, Lat. 24° 20′ *N., Long,* 84° *W.*
Friday, 12*th January,* 1849.

I have said, in the course of my letters, that a large English packet, running to foreign parts, presents an epitome of the society of the world at large; and now the many devious and unexpected turns which our voyage has taken, may entitle me to call it a pretty accurate representation of the mutabilities of life. This will be best seen, perhaps, when I come to sum up our passage.

We had a delightful run from Jamaica to the Havana: splendid moonlight nights, a favouring breeze, smooth sea, and deliciously balmy air. We were much on deck, and many and various were the nautical games brought out to amuse us:—"Bull" and "Monkey," "Rooster-quarrel," and

"Sea-billiards," with many others, which I need not stop to explain; but they were all a source of merriment on deck. The evenings were given to dancing; and for a musician we had now "George," the quaintest and most old-fashioned little cabin-boy you ever saw. When dancing commenced, he was mounted on the capstan, where, with his little legs dangling in the air, he moved his indefatigable bow to polka and waltz with entire success.

Yesterday morning, Thursday, the 11th, we came in sight of the Havana; and at nine o'clock, we were abreast of the celebrated fortification, called "*el Morro*," situated at the entrance to the narrow passage which leads into the beautiful harbour. The fortification, which is triangular, and erected on a fine promontory, cost the Spanish Crown ten millions of dollars in the construction. A smaller fortification stands on the opposite side; and a fortified castle crowns a neighbouring hill, which commands the seaward approaches. The entrance to the harbour is by the passage between the two opposite shores, three-quarters of a mile long; but the *channel* of which is so narrow, that only one vessel can enter at a time, and it is fortified

through the whole distance. The "Morro" is mounted with forty pieces of ordnance, almost flush with the sea; * while the opposite fort, called "Puntál," is strong, and connected with the town to the north. The harbour will accommodate almost any number of ships of the largest class.

We were up early, and ready to go on shore. All idea of quarantine had fled from our minds:—when, lo! a boat, rowed by eight men, with a gruff old Charon at the helm (he being harbour-pilot), neared us. He ordered a rope out, by which he attached his boat to our vessel, and thus, as we *towed* our pilot, from the stern, he sat in his boat giving orders, directing, at last, our commander to anchor in the quarantine ground! O, the dismay which filled our souls! Then came the health boat. The ominous yellow flag was thrown to us to hoist, and strict quarantine was confirmed by the Captain of the Port, a handsome-looking man, who came off in his boat, bringing with him Mr. Crawford, our Consul-General. Yes; strict quarantine for *all*, with intimation to our

* I forget what 64-gun ship it was that was re-manned three times before the Morro, when the English took the Havana, in the Seven Years' War.

wretched fellow passengers bound for *Havana*, that they would be transferred to another vessel, and there remain in quarantine for twenty days! Twenty long, dismal days of close and insalubrious imprisonment awarded wholesale, without the remotest allegation of crime, wrong, or fault, by the unhappy prisoners committed!

Now consider the folly, the extravagance, the absolute insanity of this proceeding — alas! but an imitation of the wretched example which we at home first set to other nations.

Cholera, we know, is not infectious: it is epidemic; it is in the air. When we left England, the cholera existed in so mild a form, that only nineteen cases were reported, I think, in one week, throughout the whole country. From England to Havana, we had been at sea forty days. We had landed at St. Thomas's, where we changed our ship; we had landed at Jamaica, and thence we had a clean bill of health; not a case of sickness of any kind had arisen on board, all were in robust health; forty days of fine sea-breeze, not a complaint, not a trace, of illness among us; and yet the unfortunate passengers for the Havana were to be shut up in a close, pestiferous little

cabin for twenty days! Our *vessel* had not been in an English port for five months; but, having taken a European passenger at St. Thomas's, quarantine in the Havana for twenty days! This is the beautiful, rational, sensible system which dear enlightened old England not only refuses to give up, but encourages, throughout the world, by her noble example! O the amiable reverence with which we regard the follies and the freaks, and, above all, the ignorant prejudices, of our dear forefathers!

The execrable part came first, and the laughable part followed. In the health-boat were sundry small casks of vinegar and chloride of lime, under the charge of a man who may be designated *tongsman*. His tongs were of bright brass, ingeniously constructed, and fastened to the end of a long pole; so that, resting the under part on a rope of our vessel, the tongs opened; and, on being lifted off again, they closed with a spring, tightly grasping whatever was inserted in them. Up, then, came the bright tongs for our muster-roll and some other paper: in the purser pushed them, and away went the shining messenger with the prey in its mouth. It was swayed to a

vinegar-bucket in the boat, plentifully sprinkled with vinegar, then delicately laid hold of by the thumb and forefinger of an affrighted sailor, who conveyed it to the harbour-master. A variety of papers were subjected, separately, to this purifying process, and then commenced the delivery of our correspondence from England.

The bags were lowered down to our *own* boats, and there disgorged thousands of letters, newspapers, packets, and pamphlets. A sharp chisel was then struck through each letter, paper, etc.; chlorine and vinegar were next thrown over them, and then the now-disinfected property was transferred to the Havana boat. You will receive your letters from me thus purified. The operation was a long one; and meantime we went on *coaling*, in which the same fanciful and farcical care was taken to prevent contamination from ideal cholera.

Another change, one of great difficulty to some on board, was announced. Mr. Crawford ordered us to proceed direct to Vera Cruz, leaving the passengers bound for New Orleans and Tampico to make the best of it. Of course. What are passengers? So much live lumber, which must not

be allowed to interfere with, or cumber, Her Majesty's mails. So our fellow-passengers, in this case, had the pleasing alternative of proceeding to Vera Cruz, and *returning* to Havana, to go by the following packet to New Orleans and Tampico; *or* they might await the return of the packet to Havana—they remaining, meantime, in quarantine. The latter course was adopted by only two of the passengers placed in this predicament; and *their* peregrinations, caused by our long passage, form a dismal little episode in our principal epic action. I have been so busy with other matters, that I have not yet mentioned Mr. Johnson, and his sister Mrs. Morris.

They are Americans (United States): the brother settled at New Orleans; the sister, with her husband, at New York. Thither Mr. Johnson had gone on a visit; and Mrs. Morris being in delicate health, it was determined she should winter in the mild climate of New Orleans: but, in an evil hour, our travellers farther resolved that, instead of going direct (a short operation, by land and water, through the States), they should take the royal mail steamer which now visits New York monthly, go passengers to Bermuda, and

there trans-ship themselves, to the out-coming packet from England, for Mobile and New Orleans.

Now the vessel in which Mr. Johnson and his sister were to take this latter passage, was the "Avon," which, as you well know, never got to Bermuda at all. Mr. J. waited there five days for us; and then, against good advice given him, he resolved to go to St. Thomas's, expecting to find us there; but being, day by day, disappointed after his arrival at that island, he had actually taken a passage, and was just about to sail, with his invalid sister, by a little sailing-vessel, on the very day when (happily, as Mr. Johnson thought) we made our appearance. So they came with us to Jamaica and Havana, as New Orleans passengers.

Figure, then, the dismay of this couple, on being told, at Havana, that, although they had taken and paid for their passage to New Orleans, the "service" of Her Majesty's Government, and of the Company, would not permit of the "Forth" going to Mobile; and that, therefore, Mr. Johnson and Mrs. Morris must take the chance of the following steamer, which might, in all *probability*,

go to the said port. Great was the wrath of Mr. Johnson, and a most natural wrath it was. He threatened the captain, and spoke of all sorts of protests; he condemned, in unqualified and plain-spoken terms, the way in which he had been cheated, bamboozled, and taken in. He sneeringly asked if that was the way in which England *generally* fulfilled her engagements? Perhaps not; but then, what are passengers when outnumbered by letter-bags from Saint Martin's-le-grand? Chaff to be blown away from the corn—the refuse to be thrown overboard by Her Majesty's Superintendent of the Mails. So all Mr. Johnson's just indignation, as a neutral, went for nothing: our condolence only irritated him. "Be just and honest," said he; "and then we shall not require your condolences." At Mr. Crawford, who tenaciously kept to his orders, our American friend looked revolvers: all in vain! poor Mrs. Morris was too ill to bear the voyage down the gulf and up again: there was nothing for them but quarantine and patience. Of the former, Mr. Johnson was going to have a great deal; of the latter, unfortunately, he had very little.

But, to come down to our own *petites misères*.

All our hopes of spending a couple of pleasant days ashore, and of seeing the lions, "vanished into air, thin air." What was my letter of introduction to the good old Spanish house of Mongoaga and Co. worth now? Nothing. And the Tacón—the splendid opera-house—with *Marini's* benefit that very night! All disappeared from our tantalised vision, under the pestiferous shade of the hated yellow flag. O how sensibly do we feel, and how vividly do we see the folly and stupidity of governors of nations—, (and blush! dear Lords of the Admiralty, to think that YOU have, in the present instance, led off the dance of tom-foolery—,) when their absurdities affect our own comfort! Never before did I so heartily quarrel with the quarantine laws! Never had I obtained so clear a perception of their perverse, silly, and laughably-barbarous tendencies and effects, as at Madeira and Havana! Would that, at the latter, we had had the First Lord of the Admiralty, bound for Cat Island, and disinclined to run all the risks for nothing of the Gulf of Mexico.

We had to content ourselves with a view of the fine city before our eyes, and of the surrounding objects which adorned the shores of the great

natural harbour in which we lay, from the deck of the Forth, even as a beggar has to content himself with looking at the display of a pastrycook's front through the window. No fruition in either case. The scene around was animated and picturesque. The number of vessels gathered along the quays, and riding at anchor in the bay; the bright houses in the town, mostly white, but a good many *sky-blue*, and some washed with other tints, all clean looking, many handsome buildings; the grey spires; the gigantic palm trees behind the city; the villas, the green fields; all were grouped together in a pleasing panoramic view. Then, by the light of the silver moon, which at night rose and gradually threw its beams over the gay city, and on the perfectly still deep-blue water, the objects came out in lines so softened, yet so clearly defined, as to give a still more charming effect to the scene than it possessed in the broad glare of day.

Saturday, 13th, at Sea.

Yesterday morning, at seven o'clock, the Forth being ready to proceed on her voyage, we had the

health-boat, and the officers and the captain of the port in his own boat, again accompanied by Mr. Crawford, at the ship's side. There, in the health-boat, sat the master of the tongs once more, surrounded by his vinegar barrels and trough, to conclude his purifying and disinfecting functions.

At eight A.M. the melancholy procession of the quarantine prisoners, whom we were about to see consigned to a twenty days' seclusion from the world, moved off from the gangway, in profound silence, and descending over the ship's side, they were rowed in a boat, belonging to an American brigantine (one of a cluster of quarantine vessels), to their aquatic lazaretto, where we presently saw them take their pensive stand under the frightful yellow flag. The passengers who then left us were nine in number, seven for the Havana and two for New Orleans. Among the former were:—

1st. Mr. and Mrs. Z—, a Spanish couple, established at Havana, he being one of the rich planters there, and, though a young man, making, as I was told, £15,000 a year *nett* by his sugar estate! What a different tale have our once rich Jamaica planters to tell! But Mr. Z— works his estate himself—no waste, no riotous living, no

absenteeism, no complication or roguery of management. "*El ojo del amo,*" says the Spanish adage, "*engorda el cavallo,*" and so Mr. Z. looks after his own horse and has a sleek, fat animal for his pains. Mr. and Mrs. Z— were agreeable and genteel people—, the latter young and pretty.

2nd. Our nice friend Mons. D—, the best of our foreign passengers. He went, as I have said, by the name of Cavaignac among us. A well-bred, lively young Frenchman; well informed, a staunch Royalist, and, above all (for our selfish views), a splendid musician.

3rd. Doctor F—, an estimable man, with whom H— and I were much delighted. He predicts confidently the downfall of Cuba, by some movement or another, and although well established there, he is already looking out for some other place where he can calculate on greater stability of public affairs. The doctor's deafness distressed him sometimes, for he feared it might end in being total. But generally he was lively in his manner, and had a playful and happy wit; while his modesty alone hid from general view his varied knowledge and highly scientific acquirements.

4th. Our Spanish spinster, as she turned out to

be, although she assumed matrimonial honours. She was a bold, pretending, and disagreeable woman, of dubious character, and unlady-like behaviour.

5th. Mr. Johnson and Mrs. Morris, our unfortunate North American passengers, mentioned a few pages back.

We are now enjoying beautiful weather, and I shall resume (D.V.), from Vera Cruz, where we expect to arrive on Tuesday, the 1st.

LETTER VII.

THE SHIPWRECK.

Campeachy, Yucatan,
19th January, 1849.

"CAMPEACHY! Yucatan! 19th January, when you ought to have been in Vera Cruz on the 16th!" Such would have been your natural exclamation, had this account of our voyage reached you first; but although it will not be so, I must proceed to chronicle, even more minutely than heretofore, the new and unlooked-for events and misadventures of our voyage.

We got out of Havana harbour, as I have said, on the morning of the 12th, re-passing the "Morro," at about nine A.M. We picked up four new passengers, as we were clearing the bay:—a German professor of Daguerréotype, with a Spanish lady, whom he had lately married, and loaded also with his whole stock in trade, with a view to setting up in Mexico. The others were a padre or priest,

from old Spain, a somewhat queer-looking individual; and his companion, a younger man. He might have been the padre's son, were it not that the Catholic clergy, however burthened with a nepotic tribe, are removed from filial claims by their vow of celibacy, and their typical marriage with holy church.

We had a fine run on Friday and Saturday, and now our conversation began to turn on the fatal reefs of Alacranes (*anglice*, scorpions), and on which, it is in the recollection of all, the Tweed was wrecked two years ago. Our surgeon on board the Forth was the same Dr. Rowland who was in the hapless Tweed, and whose conduct, on that occasion, obtained for him so much, and such well-merited praise.

The caution, vigilance, and experience of Captain Sturdee guaranteed to us that no similar misfortune could overtake the gallant Forth.

On Saturday we were all in high spirits; and Captain Sturdee informed his passengers generally, that we could not pass the reef before eight o'clock next morning. He had obtained excellent astral observations, and his course showed a distance of twenty miles from the reefs, when we should come

abreast of them. At noon we were a hundred and seventy-five miles off; and, as we were going eight to eight and a half knots, that gave us till eight o'clock next morning to come to a parallel line with the reef.

Captain Sturdee having the account of the loss of the Tweed, written by Mr. Cameron, the Company's Agent at St. Thomas's, I read it on Saturday forenoon; and at night, when talking of the Alacranes, I said to him (Captain S.) half in joke half in earnest: "Now, let me offer one piece of advice; *Give the Alacranes a very wide berth!*" Without answering me, our commander took my arm, and carried me to his cabin: "Now then," he said, "I wish to show you exactly where we are, and what we are doing." And so he did; and that so satisfactorily, that I went to bed (it was past eleven), fully assured that we were really giving the Alacranes a very wide offing.

Shortly after five in the morning, and while darkness still struggled with the dawn, hurried steps on deck, with some loud orders given, half wakened me from my sleep; in a few seconds after, a movement of the ship made me start up in my berth. I knew the movement and the sound too

well. I had been wrecked before. We were among rocks. I was unable to conceive where we could be. I hurried on my trowsers. I passed H—'s cabin door, with a sinking heart. The vessel now swayed so frightfully from side to side, that I was dashed alternately on the opposite panels of the long passage which formed one range of our cabins. Emerging from it, I was thrown on the second deck. The noises on board, and the dashings of the ship against the rocks, were terrific. I scrambled up the companion. What a scene to witness! Foaming, frantic breakers dashing up against and over the ship, and roaring around us! Sea—only sea, white with foam on every side! And every one staggering, holding on, bewildered with the incessant crashing of the ship's sides and works and machinery, among the sunken rocks.

I saw all in one look: there was nothing but despair; no hope of salvation. To all appearance, the ship was rapidly going to pieces, and about to mingle her timbers and her wreck, with our own bodies, in this furious surf, among the surrounding sharp-pointed rocks.

The idea of such a fate impending momentarily over H—, unmanned me. My soul was filled with

unutterable anguish. I was to prepare her at once to die; and to meet, in the midst of health, so awful, so cruel a death, before my very eyes! So young, so full of life and hope; impelled by the strength of her affections to follow me across the deep; and now, without a moment's warning, to seal her filial piety with her blood! Never shall I forget, for a day together, the grief and agony of that moment.

All that I have here set down passed in three or four minutes; that is, from the time of "Breakers a-head" being called out, to the moment of my rushing down from the main-deck to H—'s cabin, to bring her up while there was yet time. All were now astir; and I found H—, trembling and agitated, in the passage. Instead of comforting her, I could only tell her to prepare to die; that we had no hope. But I urged her upon deck, undressed as she was, only adding her slippers and cloak. I recollected the Tweed. With the same difficulty as before, listening still to crashes which sounded as the knell of every one on board, holding on, swaying backwards and forwards, slipping, bruised and wet, we got to one of the side-seats on deck, where the evening before we

had sat so securely, enjoying the breeze, and talking of our approaching arrival at Vera Cruz.

Meantime, the first noise and confusion inseparable from such a state of things having been hushed by Captain Sturdee, he then calmly, but resolutely, told every one on board, that the safety of all depended on order and silence being maintained; that the responsibility rested with him; and that he *must* be obeyed. He then went on giving out his commands with admirable coolness and precision. I had H— reclining in my arms, while Captain Sturdee himself, Lieutenant Molesworth, Dr. Rowland, and others, came to re-assure her of ultimate safety; although I knew well, in my own mind, they had then no more hope than I had myself.

At that moment, at the commencement, we had, I say, no hope; but the first movement of despair very soon gave way to calmer feelings: and it is remarkable, as well as most creditable to the females on board, that not one cry, shriek, or lamentation was heard from beginning to end of our perilous shipwreck.

The "Forth" struck at twenty minutes past five on Sunday morning, January 14th. Captain

Sturdee, as was the case with myself, could not comprehend, at first, *where* we were. It appeared a physical impossibility that we should be on the Alacranes; but while he was making the remark to me, our worthy friend Rowland, who stood by, gravely shook his head, and said, it looked to him the *very place*. And too true it was: as daylight opened up, we discovered that we were on that fatal reef; and that, whatever might become of the passengers, the fate of the ship was inevitable, for nothing now could prevent her from going to pieces.

We had at first expected and feared that the "Forth" would immediately break up, even before the boats could be lowered, as a last resource for the preservation of life. We were, however, agreeably surprised to find the ship, although full of water, holding together, which, of course, was our salvation; the fact being, that, after the first few tremendous blows which the vessel received, whilst striking against the wall, as it were, of the coraline mass, Captain Sturdee was able to back her, and then run her inside the reef, where, rocking and swaying and crashing still, the "Forth" made herself a bed between two ledges, which held her

frame upright, as in a narrow slip. We did not at all foresee this temporary safety on board; and therefore Captain Sturdee continued to take his measures towards saving the lives of his passengers and ship's company, in case of the vessel suddenly breaking up. He gave orders to hoist out the two life-boats, capable of holding from sixty to eighty persons each. Our minds, meantime, were greatly relieved by perceiving how remarkably and unexpectedly well our strong ship bravely withstood the blows of the coral rocks, and the buffetings of the wild breakers. The life-boat on the port side of the ship was stove in by a heavy surf, and we were a good deal disheartened to see her thus rendered entirely useless. But with the boat on the starboard side we were more fortunate; for it was got safely over the ship's side, and floated beneath us. One after another, the rest of the boats were launched—the pinnace, the gig, the mail-boat, and the cutter.

When I saw we must get into the life-boat, and there be exposed to all the roughness of the sea, I determined to return to H—'s cabin for some more clothing. The ship was rolling as much as ever, and it was a difficult matter to go below.

I only found for H— a dressing-gown and velvet cape. I then went into my own cabin, and laid hold of my own dressing-gown, a good thick one, and therefore a prize. I did not even *think* of bringing up either money or papers: I only thought of our lives; indeed, I can safely say, I only thought of H—'s preservation.

As I returned with the things saved, and had reached the last step of the companion-ladder, a sudden lurch of the ship sent me to the bottom of the stairs, head-foremost. Completely stunned for a few seconds, two or three of the ship's people kindly hastened to my support. I was assisted to the side of poor H—, whose troubles were only increased by this untoward accident.

Captain Sturdee now gave orders (seven A.M.) that all his passengers and some of his crew should get into the life-boat. Mr. Barleigh, the fourth officer, and a very fine young fellow, took the command of it; and, descending first with his men, they greatly assisted in carrying through the operation of lowering the passengers from the high deck of the rolling "Forth," to the pitching boat in the gulf below, now raised by a wave, now in a

trough of the sea, and the spray, throughout, dashing over and into her.

H—'s first impression was, that only females and children were to go into the boat; but, on learning that I and other passengers would also descend, she went more readily through the frightful trans-shipment; her hands besmeared with tar, her scanty apparel soiled and wet, her hair dishevelled, and her stockingless feet in a pair of soaking slippers.

But she was well cared for by our gallant and dexterous friend, Lieutenant Molesworth, who successively took all the children and females down to the boat, in which Barleigh stood, ready to receive each deposit as it came. Thus, the former, taking H— in his left arm, grasped a rope attached to the ship in his right hand, and, swinging himself with his burden into the air, he dropped rapidly into the unsteady boat, where Barleigh, with his own body, broke Molesworth's fall; while both secured H— from coming into contact with sharp points, or striking against the seats of the boat.

In this manner Molesworth, regardless of the

incidental blows which fell to his own share, saved the limbs of the ladies, the children, and the stewardess; and when I was about to descend as I best could (for I was much lamed in the back), Molesworth insisted on my getting on his back, and off he swung with me, and I landed without hurt on one of the seats. There was something of a rush afterwards of passengers, some meeting with cuts and bruises; yet the boat received in all seventy persons; and, under the circumstances, with an absence of accident that would be incredible, were the skill and coolness of the officers kept out of sight.

Well, we were out of the ship; but there we lay alongside, exposed to two dangers: one, of the life-boat's side being stove in against the ship, as it heavily swung about in the surf; the other, that of the reef and breakers which lay between us and smooth water. You are to understand, that the Alacranes stretch over a space of about eighteen miles in length, and eight in breadth. Round this expanse, as a band, are the *arrecifes*, or "reefs;" in the great centre are the *baxos*, or "shoals." Around and amidst the former, the peaked and jagged bulwarks of the latter, the

broken sea rages; while over the smooth-bottomed shoals, of course, it is peaceful and unruffled.

To remain where we were, was impossible; to pass over the reef without swamping, or having our boats knocked to pieces, seemed equally beyond a possibility. Yet we prepared for the latter alternative, at the risk of all perishing: we, in the boat, made up our minds for an immediate struggle with death, or for the chance of getting over the coral rocks, foaming with breakers, on which our ship had stranded.

To give you an idea of our appearance during the first hour, and of what was passing, is not very easy. Imagine our large, flat, uncovered barge, which, however it may be filled, will not sink, and requiring from twenty to twenty-five men to row it, with seats only for the rowers: such was our life-boat. We were all huddled together, therefore, in the bottom of the boat. Our feet and legs were immersed in the constantly accumulating sea-water, which we kept shipping in such quantities, as not only to drench us, but literally, every now and then to take away our breath. This water many of us, myself included, were engaged in baling out as we best could.

A portion of our men in the boat, released from the ordinary discipline, proved to be brawlers and blasphemers, endeavouring to command, instead of continuing to obey. The *good* men tried to restrain the other wretches, and quietly did their duty. The passengers were passive, although at the beginning three or four of them got so alarmed with the whole position of the life-boat, that they scrambled out of it, receiving many blows and bruises, but yet preferring to run their risk on board the ship.

On one side of me sat H—, all her clothes dripping; on my other side were Mr. and Mrs. C—, the German professor of Daguerréotype, and his Spanish wife, both, but especially the latter, presenting to one's view an impersonation of silent despair. The professor was bleeding profusely from a deep wound in his foot, received on dropping into the boat: the wife, thin, pale, livid, her night-clothes soaked and adhering to her form, her long black hair wild and dishevelled, might have well formed a study for either the pencil or the chisel. Farther down sat Dr. D— and his pretty little *Chihuahua* wife, whose large dark eyes, sad yet restless, turned ever and anon on the crying

infant in her arms; while a Mr. L— and his wife (who had preferred the voyage up and down the Gulf, to quarantine at Havana), abandoned, as unmanageable, their two larger children to their terror and their screams. On the other side of H— was young Jenkin, a lad greatly attached to us; he and several others near me seeming much depressed. Herr D— looked sadly around him; while, at the prow of the boat, Herr L—, without shoes or stockings, but with abundance of philosophical *sang froid*, patiently waited the issue of our perilous adventure.

Before proceeding farther, I must go back to the primary circumstances attendant on the loss of the "Forth," seeing that on this most important point I have yet said nothing.

At eleven o'clock on Saturday night, Captain Sturdee and his first officer, Mr. Wilson, had obtained excellent sights of Aldebaran and Sirius, demonstrating, to a certainty, that we had so far made good our course, which, as laid down, carried us on a parallel with the Alacranes, at eighteen to twenty miles' distance from them. At twelve, Captain Sturdee pricked off his course on his chart: and he then found we were sixty to sixty-

four miles south-east from the edge of the Alacranes: such course, as I say, leading us completely clear of the reef. He retired to rest at twelve, with orders given to Mr. Wilson to be called at five A.M. At midnight the deep sea log was heaved, and no bottom found.

It thus appears certain that, during five hours and a half, we must have run twelve and a half knots on a leeward course; when, by dead reckoning, we were only going from eight to eight and a half knots. This can *only* be accounted for on the hypothesis that an impetuous ocean under-current had, within the last six hours of our voyage, swept us along to our fate. Yet the question is immediately asked, "How came it that the breakers were not seen before we came upon them?" They *were* seen; but unhappily Mr. Wilson, confident that he could not be near the Alacranes, did not call Captain Sturdee, believing that what the man on the look-out considered to be breakers, were only the beams of the moon falling on the horizon. Poor fellow! much he has suffered, and, I fear, must still suffer, for his involuntary mistake.

At about twenty minutes past five, however,

before the dawn of day, the man on the look-out aloft called, "Breakers a-head!" and Mr. Wilson immediately ordered the sails to be backed. At this moment Captain Sturdee had already got out of his berth, preparing to go on deck. He heard Wilson, rushed up in his shirt, saw the breakers through the dim light, and called out, "Stop her! Back her!" It was too late; we were on the reef, among the breakers; when the crashes I have mentioned commenced. As a last resource, "Turn a-head: full speed!" was ordered; and by this and some subsequent manœuvre, the ship swayed round, and got into a dock-like bed within the outer reef; to which circumstance, under a merciful Providence, we doubtless owed our safety. Had the ship remained a few minutes more, perhaps one, outside the reef, where she got her first great blow, she must have become unmanageable altogether, have gone to pieces, and every soul on board must apparently have perished.

To return, then, to the life-boat. While we sat in it, rocked by the waves, and engaged in preventing her from striking the ship's side, the raging breakers continuing to dash up against us; while Captain Sturdee was eagerly scanning the

danger of our attempting to cross them; you may guess what our feelings were, when, about eight A.M., we heard from the ship a loud cry of "A sail in sight!" We forgot, for a moment, the difficulty of getting at the vessel, or of her getting at us. A tremendous cheer followed the announcement. Our flag was hoisted; and, soon after, boom! went our first gun of distress. It fell solemnly on our ears. In a minute another was fired; and soon afterwards Captain Sturdee, bending over to us said, "They have seen us, and are bearing down upon us." Another loud cheer from the ship, re-echoed from the life-boat, seemed to inspire all with new hope, and called for many a fervent ejaculation of thanksgiving to God, for the mercy extended to us.

Still there was the danger of attempting to cross the reef; and here the gallant Molesworth came forward to offer assistance. As in such cases the officers belonging to the ship itself are NOT allowed to leave her, he, the young naval lieutenant, volunteered the attempt to cross first in the cutter, to ascertain whether the reef was practicable or not. Let me do our own officers the bare justice, as Molesworth himself afterwards took an opportunity

of doing, to say that one and all of them would joyfully have performed the service in question, had duty permitted them; though this, of course, in no way detracts from the gallantry of Mr. Molesworth.

In a moment four of our best sailors volunteered to man the cutter, and they all jumped in with alacrity, to make their perilous experiment. We learned afterwards from Molesworth, that he did not expect to be able to cross, and had the boat swamped, all those in her could scarcely fail to perish among the breakers. Lieutenant M., however, took leave of all with an animated look, and the little boat then dashed into the midst of the boiling surf, Molesworth cheering on his men, and waving his hat as he advanced.

It was nervous work for us, threescore and ten, huddled together, and oscillating between life and death, to look upon the apparently frail, yet buoyant skiff, which, bravely careering over the treacherous waters, covered with a crust of frosted silver, as it were, tried to make its way over a sharp ridge of coral, now surging upwards, now sinking into a trough momentarily left by the angry breakers, but drenched throughout by heavy seas. Yet there

sat Molesworth, self-possessed, as the stormy petrel, in ocean's wildest mood, and there sat his hardy companions, pulling against eternity. At every boat's-length advance, the little bark was saluted by loud cheers from life-boat and steamer. On, on it went, tugging and struggling; until one simultaneous hurrah proclaimed that the climbing breakers had been surmounted, and that the daring cutter was in smooth water. Those only who have outlived such dangers, can thoroughly understand or appreciate the thrill of that last loud cheer. A moment after, up stood Molesworth in the stern sheets, and first waving his cap, then cheerily turning to his little crew, the canvas was spread, and away steered the cutter for the "sail in sight."

By this time we had discovered that beside the larger vessel which we had descried, there were several small craft a few miles distant, and Captain Sturdee thought he also saw land. And so, indeed, it proved to be—the little desert island of Perez, in fact, with which we were about to become familiar.

Now, then, it was our turn to cross the breakers, a yet more nervous and difficult business than that of the skiff, considering the number of lives at stake: but our men took their places in their seats;

Barleigh stood at the helm, and in another half minute we were in the midst of the surf.

It required almost superhuman exertions to move the boat through the terrific breakers. The sea appeared to be unwilling to lose its prey. It broke over us in strength so great, and sheets so broad, that it was as if a waterfall or cataract were playing over us. We made a slow and painful progress; now beaten back, now advancing. But, in the end, we were as fortunate as Molesworth: our great open barge, three-fourths full of water, with all its load of human beings, at length rode in a calm sea! As I looked at H—, even drenched, pallid, and exhausted as she was, how deep was my gratitude to God!

LETTER VIII.

THE SHIPWRECK CONTINUED.

BEFORE I recommence my narrative, I will give you an extract from H—'s first letter from Campeachy, shortly stating her feelings, and impressions, under so new and trying an event in her life as a shipwreck so perilous as was hers.

"*Campeachy, Jan.* 19*th*, 1849.

"I HOPE no vague reports of the event which has befallen us, may reach you before you receive our own version of it. Distressing as that event has been, we can never be sufficiently grateful to a merciful Providence for our deliverance, and that of so many others, from a frightful death.

"You cannot expect a clear account of all that has taken place, since I last wrote to you. My mind is still so unsettled, that I hardly know how to write; indeed, till we got ashore here last evening, we were kept in such constant excitement, that

I could scarcely define what I felt. Now that we are *really* safe, the reaction takes place, and I feel this day more depressed than I have been during any part of our late trying scenes. But I will try to be more explicit.

"On Saturday, the 13th, we had beautiful weather, everything wearing the brightest aspect. We had been getting on uncommonly well from the time we left Havana, and we were looking forward to a happy termination of our long passage.

"We knew we were not far from the scene of the dreadful wreck of the Tweed, about two years before, and we were talking in the evening of that event; but we felt so secure ourselves, that I laughed when my father said he would not allow me to read the account of the loss of the Tweed (which he himself had been studying), till we had safely passed the Alacranes. That evening I sat up late on deck, for it was lovely moonlight. I saw the captain, and when I spoke to him, he said, 'In order to be sure to keep you at a proper distance from the enemy, I have just taken another observation, and it agrees perfectly with the other; so there is not the slightest fear; we shall not be abreast of the Alacranes till after broad daylight.'

"I went down to bed after ten, with as little fear as on any night I had been on board. But although I thus went to sleep, I suddenly awakened up soon after five A.M., still almost dark, to all the horrors of an awful scene. The vessel was then on the rocks. I had only confusedly felt the first shock; but presently I knew, from the unwonted movement of the vessel, and the strange noises overhead, that something fearful must have happened. I got up, and went into my father's cabin. He was not there; he had gone on deck, having felt the first shock; but soon returning, he told me, what I saw by his agitated manner, that there was little or no hope; in fact, that we might go down at any moment. I must leave you to imagine the state of our feelings at such an instant. After a short time given to each other, we went on deck. Meanwhile the noises and heavings of the vessel were appalling. Every crash we felt seemed likely to prove the last. On deck, I cannot describe the scene which presented itself; you must wait till I can look back more calmly than at present. It was with the greatest difficulty that we could hold on to the rigging, so as not to be pitched overboard. As it was, my poor father had a serious fall, and I

cannot help wondering that he escaped as he did. Orders were now given to lower the boats, and you may fancy our dismay, when we saw one of them knocked to pieces. They succeeded, however, in safely lowering the second; into which we got, with many others, including all the females and children. We remained in the boat what seemed to me a long time; and while thus waiting, the cry of 'a sail!' arose on board the steamer, and then a boat was sent to seek assistance. I cannot describe the feelings which overpowered me throughout the whole scene; I only know, that when the words, 'We are safe!' were pronounced, I hardly understood or believed them.

"The captain behaved in the very best manner throughout: cool and prompt, he retained wonderful presence of mind. All his officers, too, exerted themselves to the very utmost; and another person, who distinguished himself in a manner not to be forgotten by those present, was Lieutenant Molesworth, whom I have mentioned in my other letters."

* * * *

Campeachy, Jan. 25th, 1849.

In less than two hours, from the time that Molesworth started, he returned in a canoe, belonging to the brigantine Bella Isabel; and, as soon as he could make himself heard in the distance, he called out, "Land, seven miles off." Then we knew we were all saved indeed; and I am sure no one among us returned a more fervent inward thanksgiving to God than I did, that the bitter cup of death had been so unexpectedly turned from my daughter's lips.

In Molesworth's wake came a decked canoe, of ten or fifteen tons, followed by two smaller ones, to take us all to the island of Perez. So providentially had all things turned out for us, that when the Bella Isabel had actually got her anchor up to return to Campeachy, her master (having gone aloft for a last speculative look-out *for a wreck*) discovered our masts. Had he started, as he intended, half an hour sooner, we should have lost this sole apparently safe opportunity of quitting the little island.

Captain Sturdee exerted himself so strenuously, that by one o'clock we were all ready to start,

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carrying some water and provisions with us. He was the last man to leave the Forth—so gallant a ship in the morning, such a wreck now. The mainmast and foremast had been cut away early, so that only the mizenmast and funnel stood. The hold was full of water; but otherwise the tough, well-built ship held together with remarkable tenacity. The bed she had made for her ponderous body, was not less conducive to our personal safety, than, in the sequel, to the general advantage, as you shall see.

The lady passengers, and those protecting them, with some of our foreign and more timid friends, were trans-shipped to the large canoe, San Francisco, commanded by her *patrón*, or skipper, José Jesús Ramirez: the rest were distributed among the ship's boats. We had now to sail over the *baxos*, or rocky shoal of the Alacranes, already mentioned, and having only two or three feet water, our boats often touched and scraped the rocky bottom as we went along. The south-west point of the formidable reef we found was the one directly opposite to that on which the Tweed was lost.

At four P.M., we arrived at the island of Perez, which lies very flat in the water, and has no other

vegetation than a coarse marine grass, with, at one extremity of the island, a large bed of the broad-leaf cactus, called in Mexico *nopál*, growing low, but covered in profusion with its fruit, the prickly pear. The islet itself is about a mile and a half in circumference.

We took the lady passengers direct to the brigantine; and, leaving H— there, I went on shore to assist Captain Sturdee in making arrangements for our getting to Campeachy.

The island presented a curious sight on my landing. About a hundred and twenty people, mostly in very bare costume, gathered round two *ranchos* or huts, belonging to wreckers (and such those who assisted proved to be), both in a state of dilapidation. Her Majesty's mails, and the few other things saved, were deposited in these hovels; while we were meantime scanning the victuals and water which had been brought on shore. No one having eaten anything during the whole day, the cook set to preparing a moderate meal for all. We were at once put on allowance—a pint of water, some very small cabin biscuits, and a portion of *lobscouse* were allotted to us *per diem*. The mouths were many, what we had saved was scanty, and we had yet to look forward

to some days' stay before getting to Campeachy. However, we were contented, declaring one and all that we had never had anything so savoury on board the Forth, as our first meal in the Isla de Perez.

When supper was over, Captain Sturdee intimated his desire to read from our book of Common Prayer, the "Thanksgiving after a Storm." Many circumstances rendered it impossible to call all the sojourners on the island together for this purpose. A number, however, gathered round our late commander, who, with a biscuit barrel for his table, in the smallest hut, an old deal box for his seat, and a candle, held by Mr. Lawrence, drew his Prayer-book from his pocket, and, with earnestness and feeling, went through the Thanksgiving, many passages of which were strikingly applicable to our case, as you will see by reading the service. All seemed to be deeply impressed with the solemn words which fell upon their ears; and I cannot but believe that the same gratitude to God which apparently filled the hearts of those who listened, was felt by many others who that night were about to sleep in safety, in the desert isle, instead of having found, as there had been too great reason to fear, a watery grave!

Captain Sturdee determined to return to the wreck at two o'clock next morning (thus only taking about three hours' rest), with the life and other boats, to endeavour to save something, particularly provisions, of which we stood so much in need. Towards daybreak we could see, even with the naked eye, the mast of our steamer, standing as we had left her.

At eight A.M., Molesworth, at my request, went off to the brigantine, to bring H— on shore; and I found she had spent the night there quite as uncomfortably as we had done on the island.

In truth, when we went to roost, we found our night's lodging in the *ranchos*, far from delectable, and, indeed, it would not be easy for you to picture any thing more grotesque than our *tout ensemble* through the night. Sixty of us had one hovel; the ship's company had the other. I had for my bed one letter-bag, with legs and bodies of various passengers about me, to keep me to my own place. Heat, mosquitos, snoring, hydrogenic pressure, all forced me out about two in the morning, when I found several others already enjoying the *fresco*, and Captain Sturdee and his people preparing to be off.

After the boats started, we roamed in small parties round our little empire, many breakfasting off the prickly pears, quite ripe and juicy, although I cannot say they were much to my taste. Our anxiety, as the day advanced, was to know that our captain and people were all safe; and to see what the boats brought us. With the first arrival therefore from the Forth we were all to be seen lining the shore, while great was the bustle, and not small the delight which ensued. Turkeys, sheep, geese, barrels of biscuit, preserved meats, and a variety of other things were landed. All this stock had been rescued with the utmost difficulty. Captain Sturdee arrived last; and by the evening, the passengers had received in a damaged state, a great part of their luggage, as had the sailors most of their kits.

We were now quite safe for provisions, even should we have a long passage; so on Tuesday morning, the 16th, away went part of our flotilla to save more, if possible, of the passengers' luggage, and to bring a further supply of water.

Captain Sturdee and I had chartered the "Bella Isabel" of course; and having agreed with the Captain that we should all be on board that

night (Tuesday), the former determined to make the best harvest he could during the last day out of the old Forth. He himself remained to prepare the "Bella Isabel" to receive us, and to superintend the stowage of her cargo—a very important work; and Molesworth went off, as a volunteer, in the still anxious expedition of sacking the steamer's hold and cabins. All employed, wrought like slaves, and the consequence was, that a great deal more in the shape of luggage, many additional stores, and an ample supply of water, was obtained from the wreck. The first who returned to us on Tuesday, was Mr. Wilson, our chief officer. He is a remarkably large, portly, tall man, with a round, rosy face, the very picture of good nature. As he neared the shore, he stood erect at his helm, in a red shirt—some gentleman's fine hat, and a huge blanket enveloping his body, thrown cloak-wise over his shoulders. He towered above all the others, and looked a picturesque representation of one of the great Romans, on the first landing in Britain. The other boats followed deeply laden, and it was amusing to observe the eagerness with which

many were now hunting after their missing moveables. Much came in a dreadfully damaged state, and the islet was transformed by degrees into a great drying-green, each proprietor having his own patch of ground. Two or three grumbled, for we *had* two or three disagreeable subjects among us; but the passengers at large bore willing testimony to the immense exertions made to recover our property by Captain Sturdee, and by those under him, really at the risk of their lives.

There was one incident attendant on the wreck which I cannot pass over in silence, for to me it appeared to be little less than *tragical* in its nature. We had on board an English cow which faithfully supplied us all with milk day by day, morning and evening, during our passage. When the Forth was abandoned on Sunday the cow was left in her stall, unconscious (*perhaps*), of her dangerous situation. On Monday, when the boats returned, she was lying quietly in her place, and she was fed by the men. Again she was left on Monday, and once more on Tuesday was found "chewing the cud" philosophically in her stall. Many of us greatly wished that she

should be brought alive on shore, and left with the two men whom the "wreckers" keep on the island, to supply them with milk. But it was found impossible to bring her without some risk of upsetting the boat on getting her into it. So the poor faithful creature was *first milked,* and then killed, and her milk brought on shore with her carcase, which was *eaten* by those who had been so long nourished by her. There was something approaching to cannibalism in this. The milk, I really thankfully record the fact, was never used.

LETTER IX.

THE ISLAND OF PEREZ.

As the Island of Perez is one of the few "lions" I can bring before you, being a place which so few travellers visit, and those few so very much against their will, I shall give you without apology, some more minute details than my own of what passed there during our three days' stay, as extracted from a long letter written by H—, from Campeachy.

"*Campeachy, 26th January,* 1849.

"You will have received, I hope, before this reaches you, intelligence of our safe arrival in this place, which is one we decidedly never intended to visit. I am sure (at least if I may judge by myself), you have but a faint idea of Yucatan, or its port Campeachy; but by-and-by,

I may do something towards enlightening you on the subject. In the meantime, I shall here just touch on our adventures, referring you for a more particular account to my father's Journal, which of course you will see.

"After getting into the life-boat, we there awaited our fate, sitting in the water already collected, and which was every moment increased by the waves, which washed over and drenched us. Then we had some of the men with bruised feet, and hands all bloody; the women with dishevelled hair, and pale faces; and the children crying.

"After long remaining thus, we heard a cry from the topmast of 'A Sail!' and yet I hardly understood the meaning of the 'Hurrah!' which was raised. The captain, however, leaning towards us, said, 'There is a sail in sight; I have signalled, and shall fire the distress guns.' Five minutes after, he returned, and added, 'She has seen, and is bearing down upon us.'

"Another cheer, loud and long, followed these words; and the next thing that became clear to me was, that as doubts were entertained of there being sufficient water on the reefs to float the boats, fears arose for our lives, should the passage be

attempted. Mr. Molesworth then volunteered to cross in one of the smaller boats, which was instantly manned by four volunteers; and then the lieutenant equipped in a sailor's 'Jersey,' with telescope in hand, taking the helm, ordered the men to go off.

"You may fancy how eagerly that little boat was watched, as it plunged through the huge breakers, which seemed very often to have swallowed it up; but as it always reappeared, every one seemed to feel more thankful and hopeful. At last, a loud cheer from the steamer announced that the little boat was safe in the smooth water.

"Of course it was still uncertain whether the large boat could pass as the little cutter had done; and, with feelings of a very mixed kind, I saw the rope cut attaching us to the steamer, which was still keeping nobly up. I really thought it impossible that we could cross through those mountains of sea, and knew that the time had come when our fate was to be decided, one way or the other. Some of the sailors near me tried to 'cheer me up,' as they said, assuring me it was all right; and, indeed, one after another, we worked through the fearful waves, each breaking over us, and

bathing us from head to foot, while the boat was at last three-fourths filled with water. Every breaker, as it rose upon us, I thought would sweep us away; but still, after each, I heard 'Another passed!' and at last the smooth water was reached, when the cheering re-commenced, echoed by our friends on board, who, of course, had, with the deepest interest, watched our course; for, in the first place, there were so many of us; and, in the second, because our safety augured security for the other boats.

"Waiting for these, our men lay on their oars, in smooth water. Whilst there, we saw Mr. Molesworth return towards the Forth in a canoe, passing near enough to call out to us, that 'there was land and a vessel near at hand.'

"We reached the brigantine between four and five P.M. The ladies were all put on board the Bella Isabella, which was so small and inconvenient, that only the husbands of the three ladies accompanied us, the other gentlemen remaining on the little island of Perez, a quarter of a mile from our anchorage.

"Almost every one believed that the Forth would break up during the night, and that little or

nothing more would be got out of her; and so it was immediately determined that we should be put on 'allowance,' sailors and every one else faring alike.

"On board the brigantine, we also had our discomforts; for the cabin, which, of course, was not large, was to serve as a sleeping apartment for Mr. and Mrs. L— and two children; Doctor D—, wife, and child; Mr. and Mrs. C—; the stewardess, the captain, and two mates! So, considering we were within the tropics, you may imagine it presently became pretty close; and accordingly, as soon as I saw all my female companions as soundly asleep as though they had been in the most comfortable quarters, I left them, preferring the moonlight on deck. Young *Agapito* Jenkins accompanied me; and, after some search, we found seats, on which we placed ourselves, so as to command a full view of the recently desert, but now thickly inhabited island of Perez.

"After the extraordinary excitement under which we had laboured, I enjoyed very much my seat on deck, watching the moonbeams on the calm sea, and thinking over all the incidents of the day. This, however, did not prevent me at last from

feeling very cold, for the nights now were chill, and our clothes were quite wet; so we made towards the smoke of the caboose fire. It was a sort of shed, only just large enough for two persons, and we found it occupied by the Spanish cook and one of the Forth's servants, who, in his hurry to get on deck in the morning, had fallen and broken his arm. The cook relinquished his place to me, and I sat for an hour, in an atmosphere of thick smoke, drying my clothes and warming myself. The fire, I suppose, made me sleepy; and what with this, and the excitement and fatigue I had gone through, I felt at last quite worn out. Yet I could not return to the horrid cabin. So I lay down on the deck, with a cloak for a mattress, and a carpet-bag for a pillow; and there I slept soundly for upwards of two hours.

"As soon as light dawned, I got up, and of course looked first of all towards the island, where I saw every one astir, and preparing the boats for an expedition to the wreck, which made me turn to the old Forth; and I was surprised to observe that she remained in the same state as when she was abandoned.

"I began to long to be on the island, with my

father and the more congenial of our companions. So I asked Jenkins to leave in the next boat, and ask if I might go on shore. Soon after, the boat returned, in charge of Mr. Molesworth, with whom, nothing loth, I went on shore, and was cordially received by many of my kind friends, and welcomed to Perez. I found my father suffering from the effects of his fall; and, of course, all had passed a miserable night.

"Having inspected the arrangements of the Perez Barracks, which did not take long, and said 'Good morning,' in many different styles, from the formal bow to the cordial shake of the hand, during which operation I had frequently occasion to smile at the strange appearance and costume of most of our companions; I next sallied forth to take a survey of the 'Isle of Beauty.' Mr. Lawrence was my cicerone, with whom I made the *grand tour*, so you may fancy our territories were not very extensive. My father, although lame, and Mr. Hamilton, were indefatigably busy all the morning shell-gathering, and they made a beautiful collection as a remembrance of Perez.

"The only green production of Perez is that

species of the cactus which bears the prickly pear, and which we found just ripe, and in great abundance. It is the size of a small pear, of a bright pink colour, with a thick skin, with but little flavour, and full of pips; but being juicy it was in great requisition by the new inhabitants.

"After our walk, we returned to breakfast, which consisted of soup and four little biscuits each, with half a pint of water. No plates, no spoons, knives, forks, salt, or any such superfluities of life; although I, being the only lady of the party, was elegantly served; for a pewter spoon having turned up, it was made over to me, and my soup was served in a neat little pan! The others got shells, broken plates, tumblers, bits of tin, etc.; but on the whole, the *déjeuner* went off very pleasantly. The doctor (who had before been wrecked under frightful circumstances in the Tweed), laughed at and joked those who were inclined to be *nice*, comparing, with good effect, his present happy condition with that which fell to the lot of his companions and himself when the Tweed was lost.

"The arrival of the first boat with all sorts of

provisions, put our old good-natured Scotch cook into high glee. Of course every one rushed down to the shore to see what had been brought, and it was amusing to behold the variety of things scattered on the beach, and the eagerness with which some sought out their property. *We* found but little; yet it was odd to see how some of the most insignificant things came to light. Among a quantity of biscuits, pretty well soaked in sea water, I espied one of the little knitting books which —— gave me. A sailor brought me my pebble brooch, and the one-half of my father's eye-glass; while he himself had the other half from a different man. Another thing which I discovered, wet and soiled, amongst a quantity of rubbish, was the toilet pincushion which A— L—— made for me the night before we left England. Such trifles have become relics more valuable than I ever thought they could possibly be.

"The boats continued to go and come till dusk, and the shore was at last completely strewed with the queerest things imaginable. I picked up some leaves of 'Emile,' a stray volume of 'Monte Christo,' and some sheets of music; and these from among barrels of biscuits, hams,

clothes of all sorts, soaking wet; Spanish jackets and English pea coats, ladies' bonnets and officers' cocked-hats, shoes, dishes, bunches of keys, smashed trunks, blankets, and in short every conceivable sort of thing. An accordion and a fiddle, too, were found and soon claimed. One amusing part of the affair was, that most of the sailors having lost their hats, and suffering accordingly while working on board, from the rays of the sun, the captain told them just to help themselves to the "tile" that fitted them best. Thereupon, all the hat-boxes were rifled, and the result was, that some of the men, only half-dressed, returned with new and fashionable hats, one with the Admiralty agent's cocked-hat, another with a faded pink, *transparent bonnet,* and yet another with the *Padre's* immense shovel hat (like Basilio's). One of the officers* had got possession of my father's straw-hat, and in fact, *egalité* and *fraternité* were the watch-words, as far as hats went. Mr. L—— said he saw one

* This officer was our first engineer, Mr. Angus, a highly meritorious officer, and a man most deservedly esteemed by every one of us, was (I record with sorrow), the same Mr. Angus who perished in the Amazon.—W. P. R.

of the sailors 'sporting a pair of his best dress trowsers,' and soon after the man went up and apologised to Mr. L—— for 'having made so free,' but having no other clothing, he had taken the liberty, etc., offering at the same time to return the article in question very soon!

"At the risk of being laughed at, I must describe my own attire, certainly rather peculiar. I wore a night dress, black silk petticoat, and shawl which had replaced my boat-cloak of the day before. Then my old straw bonnet, which weathered the storm, and is even now still in existence. I can assure you, I was complimented by all on my elegant *toilette*, and was even congratulated on having recovered a *dress*. That day the captain brought me my watch, which he had found under my pillow. And, at the same time, turning to Mr. Molesworth, who stood by, he said, 'And your omnibus (the name given to a sea chest), old fellow, is coming. I got it up myself, and it was left on deck; but I made them return for it, and—there it is'!

"The next day, then, I was able to go on shore with a dress, a cloak, and a bonnet, which, though not in the very best trim, were considered highly respect-

able. As I had more clothing in wear, too, than the other ladies, I had the pleasure of supplying their wants for the passage by the Bella Isabel.

"At about five in the afternoon, the dinner was served; and the stores having increased, so was this, our second meal, to a satisfactory extent; which caused the doctor to remark, that we should never be able to get up any sympathy or compassion in England, when we were obliged to confess that our dinner consisted of soup, hard biscuits, and pork-chops, '*à discretion.*' The large sea biscuits served as plates, when the crockery fell short; and Mr. Molesworth kindly provided me with a silver spoon and fork, which he had fished out of his 'omnibus' for my use.

"We did not get off till about seven o'clock, when it was quite dark. My father accompanied me this time, and Captain Sturdee insisted, notwithstanding his fatigue, on seeing us safely to the Bella Isabel. The pulling against the fatal currents of the gulf was tremendous, and *without* Captain Sturdee we should have been carried back to the island. As it was, all the muscular strength and energies of the men were required to reach the Bella Isabel.

"Next morning, as a relief to an uneasy night, we were early on the island, and found Captain Sturdee busy preparing for our departure. He had had considerable trouble during the night in keeping some of his men in order, for, in such cases, there is never wanting some ringleader to move less daring men to evil. But the self-reliance of our commander, and his calm, but resolute manner, daunted the bad men, and reassured the good. Among our own class, too, there were two or three whose characters came out in many disagreeable traits. Indeed, as you may imagine, we got to know our fellow-passengers more thoroughly during the last week, than we might have done in years of ordinary intercourse. For instance, we never fancied that Mr. M—, apparently a thoughtless, light-hearted sailor, could show so much kindly feeling and forethought for others, which, joined to his untiring exertions for the general good, secured him the good opinion of all. Among the disagreeables, Mr. D—, I think, made himself the most notorious. I could hardly have supposed that any man could have shown himself, under such circumstances, so thoroughly selfish. But the contrast, perhaps, only served to make us

appreciate all the more our friend Captain Sturdee, whose mental exertions and bodily fatigue were excessive, yet borne with the utmost equanimity and constancy. I felt for him very much indeed, and do most sincerely trust that the efforts now being justly made to exonerate him from all blame may be successful.

"Mr. L——, too, we hope we may consider as one of our friends. Although of an entirely different character from Mr. Molesworth, he was not less kind and attentive to the comfort of others, nor less earnest in an unostentatious way, to exert himself in the promotion of that comfort, and in the active service of all around him. Then as for Mr. H.——, his constant care of my father (who was suffering from the effects of his fall), and his unremitting kindness on the island, won for himself the sincere regard and gratitude of us both. Let me not forget our young friend Jenkins, whom I have before mentioned as my companion, and who displayed an affectionate nature throughout.

"I have omitted to tell you that in front of the huts on the island, there was a heap of large pieces of coral, in the centre of which was a

flag-staff, and flying from it, when we arrived, was a little white bunting, which was soon replaced by the Union Jack. The sailors, too, got up a sort of flag on their hut—a square piece of canvass, on which was very neatly painted the 'The Sailors' Home.' We had some amusement this morning from a proposal of Mr. Molesworth, that, as we were now so comfortable on the Island of Perez, with the British flag flying, we should take possession of it in the name of her Majesty, feeling assured of her royal gratitude for so valuable an addition to her territory. Hereupon, that we should form a colony, elect a governor, organise a military and naval force, etc., were propositions immediately brought forward by others present; and under this annexation, such high-sounding titles as Governor-general, Admiral of the Station, Postmaster-general, Physician in Ordinary, President of the Museum of Natural History (Collector of Perez shells), etc., were distributed to the satisfaction of all parties.

"But I am afraid you will think I am never to leave Perez, and so I really must try to get on board of the 'Bella Isabel.' You must

excuse, however, my being so prolix over the days of the island, as being, for a lady recently from the 'west-end,' certainly something out of the common.

"Well, then, let us say 'good-bye' to the island, hoping, as we did on really taking leave of it on the evening of the 16th, that we may never see it more, although anything but ungrateful for the refuge it afforded us.

"We put off going on board till dark, knowing that whatever might be the discomforts of Perez, those of the brig would be greater. It was very late before every one got on board, but there at last they all were, stowed away in a small ship in which there was scarcely standing room for them. The sheep and poultry were moving about us, threading their way through the crowd of passengers from 'stem to stern' (observe my nautical terms), and looked very happy. Then this little, dirty Spanish vessel, after our beautiful, large, clean decks! It was indeed a change. However, we were fortunate in the weather, which continued to be lovely. I went to bed early, and had a better night's rest, the cabin being now entirely given up to the ladies. At

eight A.M., next morning, we were out of the Channel, and nothing particular occurred during the day. We were so hemmed in on deck that, after I had taken a seat, I was unable to leave it, and there I exchanged compliments with our friends on our improved toilets, for indeed we were told that some were 'got up totally regardless of expense.' We had now more to eat and drink than we wished, and luxuries were added in the shape of oranges, guava jelly, and a little Madeira, together with chocolate for the ladies. Thus hoping that another day would take us to Campeachy, we got through our time without much *ennui*. Next day was so calm and still that we were half afraid we might not be in time to land at Campeachy that evening. However, in the afternoon a slight breeze sprang up, and at last we were rejoiced to make out from the deck the prettily situated town of Campeachy. Still more pleased were we to come to anchor about half-past five P.M. The health or visit boat came off soon after, and then I had the privilege of accompanying the first *official* party, consisting of the captain, my father, and two others, in our own old Forth boat (the

only one we brought), rowed by four of our good 'Forth' men. In ten minutes afterwards, we were on the jetty of Campeachy harbour."

These "Extracts" have run to such a length that here I may conclude this letter, claiming for my next some attention to my own version of some of the matters here handled.

LETTER X.

THE WRECKERS' ISLAND CONTINUED.

DURING our short stay at the island of the wreckers, we, all (with the exception hinted at) did our best to amuse each other; and, in this way, Doctor Rowland shone out as the most successful. His philosophic bearing, his quaint and happy humour, running in a vein of unostentatious wit, made him deservedly a favourite with the great majority of his co-unfortunates.*

The owner of the barge-canoe and his men were wreckers, not professedly, but certainly *de facto* wreckers. The Bella Isabel—although with a decent little skipper—was also employed on the fatal, but profitable Arrecifes de los Alacranes; so

* With unfeigned sorrow, I have to record here (in 1852) the death of Doctor Rowland, about two years and a half after these pages were written. His two shipwrecks having given him a distaste to sea life, he succeeded in establishing himself in good practice in Fulham. There, alas! he departed from this life, quite a young man, in June, 1851.

the crews, being of a somewhat unscrupulous character, many robberies were perpetrated. Large sums of money, and articles of value, were abstracted (we suppose during the nights) from the wreck. Among our own men, too, we had some bad fellows; and there is every reason to believe that some the robberies were committed by them. My great, and, to a large extent, irretrievable loss was that of a tin box, containing every letter, paper, and document I had with me. I had, unfortunately, placed with them my money (in sovereigns), and some valuables; and to this, of course, I must trace the loss of the box and its whole contents. To secure the money from any future discovery, the box and papers, I doubt not, were thrown overboard. Captain Sturdee, Lieutenant Molesworth, and the officers of the ship equally exerted themselves to recover the little package—so valuable to me; but all in vain. It had disappeared from my cabin, and had never been seen or heard of more. Consider the awkwardness of going to a new country, in an official capacity, without even a line either to authenticate my mission, or to identify myself!

But whenever I found myself inclined to regret

that I had not saved "my little tin box," on leaving the Forth, in a moment my conscience accused me of an unseasonable worldly-mindedness, which could balance in the scale, for a moment, a comparatively petty loss, with the enormous debt of gratitude which I owed to Providence.

To return to our short abode at Perez. While others were lounging about, my friend H— and I were busily engaged, under a tropical sun, in making such collection as we could of the natural curiosities of the wreckers' island. They consisted principally of shells (we cleared the island of the best), beautiful sea fans, fine specimens of coral, fossils, etc. We were very proud of our collection, for no one else had been able to find anything worth gathering. But we went more closely and methodically to work, assisted by two or three sailors, and, in fact, we spent a whole forenoon over the operation. The result of our labours was the admiration of all, and we anticipated no small pleasure from one day or other exhibiting our "Perezian Museum" in London.

One boat was left on the island on Tuesday morning, for the purpose of gradually getting our stock and effects on board the Isabel. The other

boats, when they returned from the wreck, assisted us, and by the still unflagging exertions of Captain Sturdee, the loading of the brigantine with her heterogeneous cargo was completed before eight o'clock in the evening, that is, the last man was on board by that hour. At a much earlier one, all the ship's stores, live stock, water and provisions, with an incongruous mass of luggage (including our Museum), were on board. What seemed to fill the Island of Perez, when spread over its surface, was suddenly condensed into the hold of a leaky little Campeachy brigantine, of about a hundred tons burthen. The luxury and profusion; the space, order, and gallant bearing of the mighty Forth; her commodious cabins, ample berths, and splendid saloons, had dwindled down, in three days, to the narrow dimensions, the rude disorder, and the rough appointments of a leaky, wrecking Campeachy craft, with her hundred and twenty-six passengers, gentle and simple, huddled together in a close, pestiferous, and dirty hold! And then, instead of the abundance of dainty viands offered to the fastidious palates of the "lady and gentlemen" passengers on board the Royal Mail packet, we had the bare necessaries of

life dealt out with a frugal hand, coarsely cooked and roughly served (yet devoured with the keenest appetite), in the crowded little smack of the Yucatan wreckers. But we had all just escaped from the jaws of death! Of a hundred and twenty-six souls placed on the verge of eternity, it had pleased God that not one should perish; and he must have been a selfish sinner indeed, who, under such circumstances, could find fault with anything about our opportune deliverer—the Bella Isabel.

I must confess, however, that one small misery overtook two of us, during our passage, which sorely tried our equanimity. Mr. Strutt, our purser, while laboriously arranging the stores, after the Bella Isabel had got out to sea, stumbled upon the box which held our museum. On being told that it contained shells, he asked to whom they belonged? And being told, by mistake, that they were the property of one or two of the officers, he, having little spare room, ordered it to be thrown overboard, observing, naturally enough, that officers ought to have had something else to do than to burthen the hold with "shells." Some one hearing what was going forward, hastened to find me out. It was too late. Ere I could rush to save our precious

treasure, it had been consigned to the deep, where, for aught I know to the contrary, our beautiful shells and fans and coral may now be adorning the submarine grotto of some Naiad of the Mexican Gulf.

My placid partner in the museum shrugged his shoulders, and Mr. Strutt* apologised too handsomely to allow a word to be said. We resigned ourselves to this new mishap. We tried to banish from our minds the loss which Natural History had suffered, by the tossing into the sea of the Perezean Museum.

At two A.M., the 17th, we began to warp away from the reef, the channel in which the Bella Isabel lay being too narrow to allow of our beating out. At eight we got into deep water; and at two P.M., a fair, though light breeze was wafting us towards Campeachy. Our crazy barque, now deeply laden, leaked so terribly, that day and night her pumps were kept going. The greatest danger, however, to be anticipated, was from a "norther" springing up; but, happily, any such new danger we escaped.

* This unfortunate officer, I grieve to say, was another of those who perished in the Amazon.

We were on board the Bella Isabel from Tuesday evening till Thursday afternoon at five, when we anchored in the roadstead of Campeachy. The Tuesday night in the hold was terrific. I think I would at one time have given all my worldly goods on board the brig, to escape from the corner to which I was pinned, after I had *sat* there, instead of slept, for two hours. But a proper precautionary measure, with such a crowd of people on board, had extinguished every light; and to move, in utter darkness, over human bodies closely packed, and amidst broken stowage, would have led to broken limbs; so, like many others similarly situated, I was obliged to wait the dawn, half stifled and bruised as I was. Wednesday, we had a delightful day, when we made the Travesia, or passage across to the Yucatan coast. The only inconvenience arose from the crammed state of our deck. We managed the sleeping better the second night; fewer went into the hold; and Captain Sturdee and I got *one* good berth between us, watch and watch, each four hours in bed and four hours on deck alternately, wrapped in a blanket.

Early on Thursday (about two A.M.), we made the small port of Sizal, and later in the morning,

all was bustle in the hold, as we found we should land that afternoon at Campeachy. The officers, and others, one after another, were busy at the hatchway, with a small looking-glass and borrowed razor or two, shaving. Mr. Wilson dexterously took off, not only his own beard, but that of one of his comrades, offering to operate on me, if I chose. Dr. Rowland came out quite spruce; his wit, while he shaved, being somewhat sharper than his razor. The Admiralty Agent, having a very rough, grizzly beard, got hold of a razor which drew tears from his eyes and much blood from his chin, amid many jokes of a somewhat cutting kind also. All rigged themselves out as they best could, on their knees, or squatting on the cargo, and by ten A.M. our deck was crowded by comparatively well-dressed people. The ladies had had the little cabin to themselves, and therefore they were able to *faire la toilette* a little more at ease.

The coast along which we sailed was uniformly low, and the only remarkable object which we saw, was a ruin called Jaina, having the appearance, at a distance, of an old abbey. It was said to be of three or four centuries standing.

The appearance of Campeachy, as we approached

it, was picturesque. The land, so long flat, here rises into a hilly character. The town stands prettily in the centre of the bay, the surrounding woods and palm-trees coming out in agreeable relief; while the wall round the well-fortified city, the vessels riding at anchor, and the white-washed extramural buildings running along the sea side, altogether rendered Campeachy a much pleasanter looking place than we had expected to find it.

At five P.M., we dropped anchor; and as soon as the visit-boat came off, Captain Sturdee, Lieutenant Molesworth, M. Adoue, the Admiralty Agent, the purser, H—, and myself, were rowed by four of our best men to the Mole, where, as the sun went down, and amidst a concourse of people attracted by so unlooked-for an arrival, we thankfully put foot once more on *terra firma*.

PART II.

CAMPEACHY TO THE CITY OF MEXICO.

LETTER XI.

YUCATAN.

Campeachy, 30th January, 1851.

UNDER a great variety of aspects, the world may be, and has been, classified under distinct and contrasting heads: as male and female, subdividing into young and old, rich and poor; as genteel and vulgar, idle and busy, educated and ignorant; as mercantile and agricultural, town and country; in short, opposites, without end. I remember an amusing paper in *Chambers' Edinburgh Journal,* which turned on the great division of mankind into umbrella purchasers and umbrella borrowers, the latter being a convertible term for "thieves." And among these various classes, some seem to be tied to one side, some to the other; tied to one acquired set of habits by an inevitable destiny, which fits them for one character, and renders them unfit for its opposite.

Well, among these classes, there is one not yet

specified—the moveable and immoveable, the go-abroad and the stay-at-home, the restless, and the quiet class of mankind.

The sober, settled, quiet, respectable, stay-at-home section—undoubtedly the most enviable of the two—is apt to look, sometimes in pity, sometimes in sorrow, almost always with a mixture of contempt, on the less happy opposite class—the wanderers on the face of the earth; not considering that man's nature in this, as in everything else, is regulated by a Higher Destiny than his own absolute will; that there *must* be such a class, as one of the great and indispensable elements of the social system which the Creator of the world has established; and that to fill up such a class, as to fill up all others, individuals must be predisposed by some hidden mental and physical organisation, fitting them for their vocation. Such individuals can no more resist the instinctive love of change, than can the others resist those of fixedness and repose. Phrenologists resolve all this into a bump of locality; but that is a meagre and unsatisfactory solution of the problem. It is no solution at all: it is at best an index to a book, not the book itself. At the same time, nothing here said, as every

reflecting mind will perceive, involves anything like a doctrine of Fatalism.

So much premised, I proceed to admit that I recognise in myself one of the wandering class. I made a vast, and, as I thought, an effectual attempt to change sides, seeking additional respectability, through stability; for I remained during eleven years in one place—London. But it has proved after all in vain. In the middle of 1848, I had no idea of being anywhere, during the rest of my life, but in London; at the beginning of 1849, lo, I am in Yucatan!

These remarks have been elicited by some latent misgivings that there will be, among our friends, many grave shakings of the head, when you tell them we have landed in Yucatan. I have thence been led to consider how many *travellers* there are, *bon gré, mal gré,* and so include myself in a general apology for a class.

Two days before we were wrecked, or had any fear of such a catastrophe, I said to you that our present voyage exhibited a pretty accurate illustration, in a small way, of the mutabilities of life; and I added, "This will be best seen, when we come to sum up our passage." There was something

here like an instinctive prospect of farther traits of resemblance; but I could scarcely anticipate that the picture was to come out at last, so complete in all its parts. Some deductions (if you will allow me another moment) may be drawn from this little apologetic disquisition:—First, that, as the proverb truly says, "Man proposes, and God disposes;" next, that the most remarkable quality in man is his short-sightedness, in spite of his unwearied pretensions to the contrary; and lastly, that he is ever compelled to feel, in his individual capacity, as well as to exhibit for the warning and benefit of mankind at large, the inevitable vicissitudes and mutabilities of life to which he is subject. These, you will say, are truisms ("*verdades de Pero Grullo*," as the Spaniards phrase them); but, nevertheless, they cannot be too steadily kept in view by every rational being.

It is not my intention to enter here into any lengthened account of Yucatan and its people; for I know too little of either to impart a sufficient amount of interest to my subject, or to satisfy myself of the entire accuracy of my facts. But it is a country so little known in England—popularly, indeed, scarcely known till within the last few

years, when Mr. Stephens's work, entitled "Incidents of Travel in Yucatan," has been published; while, latterly, there has attached to the Peninsula of Yucatan so painful an interest, arising out of the terrible servile war which has raged there, and which has nearly cost the country its very existence as a civilized state; that I must give you some such slight account of it, as one, having only visited a single city in the territory, may be supposed to have gleaned in so circumscribed a circle, and during a residence of little more than a fortnight.

The *East* coast of Yucatan was first seen in 1506, by Juan Diaz de Solis, and Vicente Muñoz Penzou, who had accompanied Columbus in his last voyage; but the country, properly speaking, was *discovered* by Francisco Hernandez de Cordova, who landed in 1517 from the Havana, at Cape Catoche, the extreme north-east point of the country. He went on to Campeachy, distant between two and three hundred miles, and thence to Champoton, opposed throughout by the Indians, who at last succeeded in beating him and his small force off, as they also did, next year, the expedition of Don Juan de Grájalon.

This captain had sailed along the coast of

Yucatan, till he reached the Mexican province of Tabasco. Here the report of the riches of Mexico first met the greedy ears of the Spaniards; and the eventual result was the conquest of Mexico by Hernan Cortes.

One of his chief captains, Don Francisco de Montejo, in 1526, under competent authority, undertook the conquest of Yucatan; and he obtained, moreover, from Charles V., a commission, or royal grant (*reál merced*), appointing him adelantado, or governor, in perpetuity, for himself and his descendants, with various other privileges and immunities, accorded to him and his followers.

After going through incredible hardships, which were met with unflinching fortitude, and overcome by the prowess which was in these conquests everywhere displayed, the Montejos—first the father, and then the gallant son—succeeded in conquering the indigenous possessors of Yucatan, so that, in 1542, it was raised to a Captain-Generalship of Spain, independent of Mexico, as well as of Guatemala.

Yucatan is a peninsula, terminating on the east side with the British Settlement of Belize, and contiguous on the west with the Mexican province or state of Tabasco. It lies between 18° and

22° north latitude, and 80° and 86° west longitude. The Gulf of Mexico stretches along the west, and the Gulf of Honduras along the east side of the peninsula.

Yucatan has five districts, viz.:—

		SOULS.
1st.	Merida, with a population of. . .	118,839
2nd.	Yzmal " " . .	72,096
3rd.	Valladolid " " . .	97,468
4th.	Tekaz " " . .	134,000
5th.	Campeachy " " . .	82,232
	Total inhabitants . .	504,635

Which includes the Indian population, in a proportion, I believe, of four to one.

The cities called after the above districts, have respectively—

		INHABITANTS.
1st.	The Capital, Merida	24,090
2nd.	Yzmal	5,335
3rd.	Valladolid	11,457
4th.	Tekaz	4,000
5th.	Campeachy	15,357

There are of secondary towns and villages, 253, with populations ranging from 7,551 down to 924 inhabitants. The townspeople of Campeachy

claim a much higher population than here stated, some calling it 30,000; but I think that from 15,000 to 18,000 is the outside number.

Yucatan is a poor country. To Europe it only sends dye woods (Palo de Campéché);* but it supplies Mexico, New Orleans, Belize, and the Havana with a great variety of minor articles—as salt, hemp, hides, bags, cordage, cocoa-nuts, fruits, and other things; while, for the consumption of the country, the Yucatecos seem to have all the necessaries, and some of the luxuries of life. The fisheries are very extensive, and the poorer classes, Creole and Indian, on the coast, chiefly subsist by barter or consumption of the produce of the sea, the fish being at once good and abundant. They have all the tropical fruits, and many peculiar to the Spanish American colonies, as the *chirimoya, palta,* and others; while they also produce Indian corn, rice, coffee, sugar, rum, tobacco, etc. Horses, horned cattle, and sheep they possess in moderate abundance; they reckon up 1,388 *haciendas*, something between a farm and an estate, now the one, now the other; and 2,040 *ranchos* and *sitios,* which may be likened to the huts and hovels of

* Pronounced "Campaychay."

the Irish peasantry (*without the starvation*), or to the holdings of the Highland cotters in Scotland.

In 1821 or 1822, Mexico achieved its independence of Spain, and Yucatan followed. But the Yucatecos had scarcely emancipated themselves from the mother country, when they voluntarily sunk their newly-acquired nationality in a fusion with Mexico, as a federal state of that nation.

This measure being distasteful to a large proportion of the Yucatecos, particularly to the uneasy, and not generally well-to-do party—the ultra-patriots; the result was, that they rose up against the Mexican Union; asserted their own independence as a free republic; and a war with Mexico ensued.

In 1841-42, a great expedition was fitted out at Vera Cruz, for the purpose of subjugating Yucatan. Campeachy, their great and principal port, was invested by sea and land, and, I am told here, that the siege was undertaken with 13,000 men. Probably we must make some allowance for patriotic exaggeration. But, be that as it may, all the exertions to reduce the doughty Campechanos by the Mexicans were of no avail. These

bombarded the city from a neighbouring height they levelled many houses with the ground; they made some impression on the walls; yet, at the end of nine or ten months, Campeachy remained in the hands of its gallant defenders; the Mexican force dwindled away from thirteen to one thousand men (so I am told); and then Mexico, withdrawing the remnant of her invading force, formally relinquished all pretensions to coerce Yucatan into a federal union.

This success of the Yucatecos was, perhaps, the leading cause of the most terrible of all evils under which a nation of *races* can groan—a social war, a war of castes, which overtook Yucatan in a frightful form, towards the close of 1846. But to make an account of the rising of the Indians intelligible, I must revert to the establishment of Independence here in 1822.

That change brought into play in Yucatan, as a similar change has done in every other ex-colony of Spain, without exception, two violently antagonistic parties—those who *had* property, and those who had *not*. The higher classes; the merchants, the great landowners, the substantial retail traders; the prudent, the wary, the aged, the sedate; were

all either moderates in their politics, or, here secretly, there openly, opposed to the cause of independence. They alleged, with too much truth, that the Spanish colonies were not ripe for self-government. Among the Patriots, a party which greatly outnumbered the opposite one, you counted the young, the ardent, the needy, the military, the unscrupulous, with here and there an honest, but, probably, not a wise lover of his country. On the one side were ranged all those who were content with what they had, looking only to enjoy it in security; on the other, the great mass of those who had little to lose, or who had much ambition to gratify, and who saw in the popular cause a tempting chance of bettering their circumstances, or of rising into pre-eminence. The fear of loss withheld the one, the hope of gain impelled the other.

Over and above the opposing Creole parties in politics, Yucatan held within its territory, in the aborigines, another germ of strife. The dominating *white* population was scanty—the subjugated Indian race numerous; perhaps, four or five to one. Although bent beneath the Spanish yoke, the aborigines never ceased to hate their

conquerors and oppressors. The whites, however, were too strong in their civilisation and physical superiority to fear their cowed, diminutive, and untutored serfs. Yet the masters were not ignorant that when opportunity served, the will was not wanting, on the part of the Indian, to assert his original right to the land.

From the commencement of the Independence, the Yucatecos* were aware that their well-being consisted in looking with caution to the Indian population, even although they had been habituated to treat that race with contempt. Yet, the political animosities of the whites among themselves led them, first indirectly, and at last openly, into the danger which they ought jealously to have avoided.

The Patriots were against an amalgamation with Mexico; the conservative party was for it. In their endeavours to upset the federation with Mexico, and to establish a nationality of their own, the Patriots gradually began to lean on the Indians, and to cry up their importance in the state. The Indians were not inattentive listeners.

* Whenever I speak of the *Yucatecos*, I mean the whites—the Creole descendants of Spaniards.

At length, the Patriots got the upper hand—expelled the Mexicans, and became independent. They were invaded by a Mexican force, and repelled it, as we have seen; but to do so effectually, the government had recourse to the desperate measure of calling in the most warlike of the Indians to their aid. Arms were put into their hands, and they were taught how to use them.

Now, the Indian groaned under many grievous burthens imposed upon him by the white man; and accordingly a profusion of promises were made to him of amelioration and recompense, provided the Mexicans were forced to abandon Yucatan to its own independent government. Such, in fact, was the result, and the Indian did good service in bringing it about. He naturally claimed his reward, so solemnly promised him: but the dangers were past—the promises were evaded, or their fulfilment postponed, and so, the Indian tribes were allowed to return to their homes in the far east, with acquired knowledge in military tactics, with arms in their hands, and, withal, smarting under the faithless return made to them for their gallant and effective services rendered to the state. In 1846, local dissensions in politics ran so high,

that the provinces of Merida and Campeachy came to blows. In the meantime, the Indians were preparing to rise. The people of Merida sent forces to overawe them, and demanded a contingent from Campeachy. "It is a political juggle," said the Campechanos; "there is no rise of the Indians: Merida wishes to get us into her power." So they refused to assist. But, by and by, the tables were turned: the province of Campeachy was threatened, and appealed to Merida: but Merida replied to Campeachy, as Campeachy had answered Merida.

So, the Indians, emboldened by these divisions, fell upon the provinces of Tekaz and Vallodolid on the eastern side of Yucatan, took the towns, and, with fire and sword, devastated the country; and then, too late, the Yucatecos saw, with fear and trembling, the result of a supine conduct following upon the track of broken promises. They saw that they were now about to engage in a life and death struggle for the possession of a soil, of which their forefathers had held peaceable possession for three hundred years.

The Yucatecos were taken quite by surprise by the vigorous outbreak of the despised and hitherto

humble Indians. But ages, apparently, had been insufficient to uproot the deep hatred with which the great body of the aborigines had always viewed their European spoilers—a hatred which had been so recently sharpened by unwarrantable bad faith, and by a return to ill usage on the part of the whites. Thus the war, which they began to wage, was one, not only of extermination, but of pitiless cruelty, of savage and ferocious revenge. Men, women, and children were massacred with every variety of ingenious torture. Villages, towns, and cities were burnt or demolished; and the whole north-eastern division of the republic presented one vast scene of devastation or ruin.

The troops of the government became panic-stricken, and everywhere dispersed. Terror extended itself on all sides: the people abandoning their homes and their strongholds, sought for safety in a flight to the sea-coast. Valladolid, a city of 12,000 inhabitants, and Tekaz, of 5,000 more, were abandoned; and gradually the whole interior seemed to be returning to its original owners. The individual instances of horrors committed during the progress of the Indians, have

been related to me by many, but are too sickening to be repeated here.

While the Indians were thus gradually, yet surely, overpowering the white or Creole population of Yucatan, the people sought for aid from their surrounding neighbours. But both the United States and Mexico were too busy with their own war, to embarass themselves with the troubles of Yucatan. The sovereignty of the country, as I have been assured, was proffered to the British authorities at Jamaica, and to the Spanish at Cuba, a donation which, I suppose, neither of the governors fouud himself in a position to accept. But although the Spanish authorities refused, on the part of Spain, to take back the allegiance which the Yucatecos had foresworn, the Governor of the Havana, from motives of humanity, sent succours in the shape of arms and ammunition, which were sorely wanted. And Mexico, having at length made peace with the United States, admitted the offer of the commissioners sent to propose the re-incorporation of Yucatan with the Mexican nation. Arms and war-munitions, as well as money, were sent, and at last the Yucatecos began to take heart. It was now the time to try whether the Indians or

the whites were to have the absolute possession of the soil. There was no medium—Yucatan must belong entirely to the one, or entirely to the other; and if to the Indian, the white man's life and property became equally worthless.

The whole white population, therefore, rose up and armed. They attacked the Indians, routed them in successive engagements, and retrieved their ground. At one time, the Indians were in some force, three miles from Campeachy, but they were quickly driven back. The towns and cities taken by them were recaptured, and they were gradually, although with much difficulty, dislodged from their principal points of advance, and driven towards their fastnesses in the East, bordering on the British settlement of Belize.

But the war is by no means ended as yet. An obstinate struggle, on the part of the Aborigines, still goes forward; they yet hold some important towns and places, from which the whites have not been able to expel them. Notwithstanding, the country begins to breathe; all the western peninsula is in repose; and although there is still much to do before an entire pacification can be effected,

the servile war, it is to be hoped, draws gradually to a close. Meantime, with public opinion still divided, Yucatan is once more an integral part of of the Mexican federation.

The contributions, at one time, to carry forward the war with the Indians, amounted to *two per cent. per month* on all real property and capital; that is, a fourth part of every taxable man's whole substance was, in a year, given up to the State—something worse than our three per cent. Income Tax!

I have visited two of the *haciendas*, already mentioned, and a variety of the *ranchos*. In the former, there is the rough substantiality of a well-stocked farm, adapted, in its buildings and steadings, to a tropical climate, to the nature of the work to be done, and to the produce to be grown or reared. The *corrales* for cattle, and enclosure walls, as well as the principal dwelling, are of stone—the latter, spacious, airy, and dirty. In the country, wherever you go, you find hammocks—strong, open, hempen netting—slung; the nicest sort of bed for a hot climate, when the the mosquitoes have learned, as they do in time, to leave you alone.

The *ranchos* in the towns and environs have stone walls, and a rough, thatched roof, with a few trees and shrubs; barking dogs, two or three Indians, and little dark, copper-coloured children, naked or half-naked, round and about the place. No gardens, and ground very sparingly cultivated, till you get in among the *quintas*, or country houses.

The *quintas*, or villas, are also rough in their general keeping; but some of them boast of very spacious houses, showing symptoms of decaying, old-fashioned grandeur. The grounds are laid out in flower and kitchen gardens and orchards. The flowers are varied and beautiful; the orchards extensive; and the trees, which are all evergreen, being high, present a cool retreat in summer, under their wide-spreading branches, and the ample foliage with which they are covered and adorned.

On all sides of Campeachy—on the surrounding hills, and on the low grounds of the coast, the eye rests upon nothing but green trees, even through the winter season. Yet there are cultivated patches everywhere, although screened from the view by interposing masses.

My cursory account of Yucatan, and its chief port, Campeachy, concluded, I will proceed to give you some jottings of our perambulations and investigations here, commencing with extracts from H—'s letters; after which, I hope my next accounts will be of Vera Cruz and Mexico.

LETTER XII.

CAMPEACHY.

Don Pedro's Hotel.
Campeachy, 3rd February, 1849.

FROM the jetty of the Campeachy harbour, we proceeded immediately to the house of Mr. Gutierrez who received us very kindly; and while he got all the accounts of our disaster, etc. from the gentlemen, I was left to talk (?), as best I might, with his handsome wife, whom I like much.

When the gentlemen had, concluded their business with Mr. G—, I accompanied them to the only hotel in Campeachy; and leaving others to arrange about beds, I proceeded with Mr. Molesworth to the kitchen, where we found some Creole mulatto as well as Indian women making chocolate. By means of signs and dumb shew, as we sat down among these "yellow gals," we soon got some of the delicious beverage in the highest perfection.

There was a scarcity of beds from all the passengers having come on shore, although the captain and officers slept on board, with a view to keep the men in order. "Don Pedro," the landlord of the hotel, took for us an empty house, just opposite to his inn, and had beds put into it. When I got to my room, I thought it looked rather prison-like: stone floor, windows unglazed, and merely iron bars or grating, with no furniture except my little low camp-bed. Every thing appeared strange; and what with the change to sleeping on land, (for this was the first time I had slept on shore, since I left England)—dogs barking, mosquitos humming, church bells ringing, I was prevented from having much repose. At seven in the morning, a mulatto girl brought me a cup of chocolate, and then I got up. There was a great deal done during the day—luggage to be examined, arrangements for many of our *compagnons de voyage* proceeding to their several destinations, letters to be written, etc. With some difficulty I found pen and paper, and in the midst of hubbub and bustle I just contrived to write a few words home.

Next day, letters were written to Captain Sturdee and others, as you will hear; and that

morning (the 21st) those who were in a great hurry, and did not mind inconvenience, left us by a small vessel sailing for Vera Cruz. In the course of the afternoon, all the officers, who had been most kind and attentive to us throughout, came to take leave. Among them was the doctor, a universal favourite on account of his happy temper and many pleasing qualities. As one instance, he made us laugh by his own account of his letter to his mother (whom he called "a woman of strong mind"), in which, he said, he had simply told her that "he was quite well, quite safe, and very dirty!"

At eight in the evening we walked to the mole with Captain Sturdee, Mr. Lawrence, and Lieutenant Molesworth, to see them off. I was of course sorry to part with friends who had not only done so much towards diminishing our discomforts, and cheering us throughout, but whose friendship we had learned so thoroughly to appreciate.

After watching the boat out, we returned to our now comparatively quiet dwelling-place.

I am afraid, by the time you get thus far,* you will, like myself, be tired of my long stories, so

* The long account of Perez accompanied this letter.

I will cut short our last fortnight's doings, leaving you, if dissatisfied, to peruse another full, true, and particular account which now goes forward, although I myself have not seen it.

As soon as we had dispatched our letters, and seen our friends off, we returned to make the salon of a second house (to which we had moved), more comfortable; and, with the help of our kind friends, Mr. and Mrs. Gutierrez, we succeeded *à merveille*. The large front room was furnished with tables and chairs as a drawing room, and the two smaller ones were made much more comfortable, though, even now, my father's dressing table is the half of an old folding-door supported on chairs. This was a contrivance of Mr. Molesworth, and as he put it, so it has remained. The drawing room has *no* window, so that we sit with the door open all day, and at night we sit *at* it, never shutting it up before half past ten. The lower classes here are honest, civil, and obliging. We hear that robberies are unknown. The common orders have another favourable trait, which is their extreme cleanliness. The general dress is entirely white, which, being clean, has a very pretty effect. The women wear a white petticoat, the bottom of

which is embroidered in some bright colour or colours, and *over* the petticoat is a *chemise* embroidered round the edges in the same way. The neck and arms are bare, but when out of doors, a scarf, (*generally* white too,) is worn over the head, the end being crossed on the bosom, and thrown gracefully round the left shoulder. The hair is put off their face, and hangs down the back in one thick plait; they stick a large comb on the crown of their heads, which keeps up the *rebozo* or scarf. When they want to be fine, they wear a coloured muslin petticoat with one small flounce round the bottom of it. Shoes are sometimes, and stockings always dispensed with, while, on grand occasions, they wear white or light coloured slippers. The men have a variety of costumes; but the one most general consists of very loose and rather short white cotton drawers with a little short and generally embroidered shirt *over* them. The the higher classes dress of course more or less like Europeans, except that the former *always* wear low dresses and short sleeves, with a handkerchief, (generally a *foulard*,) over their neck. They don't wear anything on their heads when out of doors, but throw a light shawl over their shoulders.

This is a curious-looking town. The low houses (few having more than a ground floor), the bright colours they give them exteriorly, the windows without glass, make the streets look odd to me. There is no beach here, which is a pity; but we have some pretty drives in the neighbourhood. We have walked, too, round the ramparts, whence we got a good view of the whole place.

On the 24th, those of our late fellow passengers who were bound for New Orleans, left in a small vessel sailing for that port, and we embraced the opportunity of writing to England.

25th. We all went to see the Campéché Museum, a collection of natural curiosities, Yucatan antiquities, etc., made by two old priests (brothers), to whom it belongs. The shells are very fine, and most beautifully arranged. I thought the old gentlemen themselves the most interesting curiosities there; but you will hear more of the Padres Camacho and their museum elsewhere.

In the evening we took a walk, and called on Mr. Gutierrez. The ladies here make all their visits after six in the evening, when they dress, as if for a ball, with flowers in their hair, and fans in their hands.

On the 26th we walked to the Alameda, or public promenade, which is just a straight line, with orange-trees on either side. We hardly saw a soul in it; so we continued our walk till we came to a *quinta*, at the great gate of which we knocked, and asked if we might see it. Having received a satisfactory answer, we went in, and found it belonged to a Spanish, or rather *Campechano* gentleman, with the very Scotch patronymic of Mac Gregor! We enjoyed a stroll in the garden very much; had some beautiful flowers given to us; and with these we returned to our "home."

Next day my father was laid up with violent pains, still the lingering effects of his fall. He was confined to bed for two days, but is now better.

On the morning of the 29th, we went to look at the theatre, and were surprised to find it much larger and handsomer than we could at all have anticipated. At present there are no dramatic performances; but a ball once a week is given in it.

On the 30th, we took a drive in a *volante* (an open carriage on two high wheels, the driver

riding postillion), and saw another fine *quinta.* In the evening we had a visit from Madame Gutierrez and her sister-in-law.

Next evening, 31st, we went to the Spanish Consul's, who has two or three pretty daughters. We had some music; and, as they had never seen the Polka in Campeachy, they begged we would show them what it was. So Herr D— and I danced it! after which, we had Spanish waltzes, etc. All this time other visitors kept coming in, making their complimentary calls, and retiring or staying, according as they best liked. We took our departure early, as I could not speak to them, although they were very good-natured, in trying to make me understand them.

Next morning, the 31st, at six o'clock, we drove to a village called Lerma. It is a pretty drive, about three or four miles along the coast, and I much enjoyed the cool morning air. We picked up some shells and sea-weed, and, taking a different road home, returned in time for breakfast.

February 3rd. This morning the owner of the Rafaela sent to let us know that she would probably sail for Vera Cruz to-morrow evening, although we are since told that we shall not sail

till Monday morning. We began, however, to make preparations for leaving, packing and making one or two purchases of curiosities, such as hammocks, which they make very nicely here, a Campeachy dress, etc. We had all our packing to do over again, for everything having suffered more or less damage in the wreck, we had taken out all our clothes, to see what we could make of them.

Yesterday evening we went to the theatre, to see the ball, M. Gutierrez having kindly offered us his box. He and Madame G. called for us, and we all *walked* together to the place of amusement. The ladies, in some cases, were really nicely dressed, except that none of them, save those of our own party, wore gloves. They wore coloured dresses, which, I suppose, they preferred to white, which is so very common here. The gentlemen wore gloves, but either black or very dark coloured! The dances were quadrilles, Spanish country dances, and waltzes. What struck me most about the dancing in general was, the total silence that reigned. No one seemed to speak to another, all went through the dance in a grave and serious manner; and, having finished, each *cavallero* handed

his partner to her seat, he himself retiring to have a *cigarette* between the dances. So that it appeared to me pretty clear that the Campeachy young ladies go to balls to dance—but only and exclusively to dance. We retired early; but after being much amused and gratified.

On the whole, we have spent a pleasant time here, and on all sides, but especially from our more intimate friends, Mr. and Madame Gutierrez and family, we have experienced much kindness and received many attentions.

LETTER XIII.

THE COMMANDER, THE OFFICERS, AND THE VOLUNTEER.

Yucatan, 22nd January, 1849.

THE day after our arrival at Campeachy, on the 18th instant, a meeting of all our passengers took place, at eleven in the morning, myself in the chair; when I explained, both in English and Spanish, the expediency and duty on our part, before we began to disperse, of coming to a general understanding on three points:—first, Whether we should not address a letter to Captain Sturdee on the loss of the Forth; secondly, How we should collect the money necessary to defray the expenses incurred since the loss of the vessel, when the Steam Company ceased to have any responsibility towards us; and thirdly, What steps ought to be taken for the purpose of getting to our respective destinations. I proposed that a Committee should be named to act for the body at large; and this

being agreed to, after some discussion, Messrs. Adoue, Lomer, Silvester, and Celis, with myself, were named by a plurality of votes.

Captain Sturdee handsomely offered, on the part of the Company (the Royal Mail Steam-packet Company), to pay the Bella Isabel in full, leaving us only to make a present to her captain, as he had behaved so well, and to settle with the owners and men of the large canoe, San Francisco, who had helped us off from the wreck, and assisted in saving some of the luggage, by bringing on shore what Captain Sturdee's boats were unable to take.

The latter had left at Perez Island his four principal boats, including the life-boat, which he now made over to the owners of the Bella Isabel, giving them, besides, two hundred and fifty dollars in cash, very handsome remuneration, considering the additional sums they would recover for salvage, to be effected by these very boats, now the property of Captain Batista's employers.

In the Committee we agreed to make a present of two hundred dollars to Don Manuel Batista, the captain of the Bella Isabel, and to give the same amount to the owner and crew of the San Francisco, although I fancy the latter, as expe-

rienced wreckers, had already reaped a plenteous harvest from the old Forth.

I proposed a present to our own poor sailors of the Forth; but the Committee objected. It was alleged, *without proof*, that some of our men had robbed.

I was requested to draw up a letter of thanks to Captain Sturdee and his officers, and to Lieutenant Molesworth, while Mr. Celis undertook one to Captain Batista. These letters being unanimously approved of by the Committee, we called a meeting of all the passengers, with Captain Sturdee and his officers, for Saturday, the 20th, in a room of the hotel.

I was "in the chair," Captain Sturdee on one side of me, and Lieutenant Molesworth on the other. After some preliminary remarks, I read the following letter to Captain Sturdee:—

"*Campeachy, 20th January*, 1849.

"Sir,

"We, the undersigned, passengers on board the Royal Mail Steam-packet Forth, bound for Vera Cruz, but lost on the coral-reefs of Alacranes, early in the morning of the 14th instant, having

met here yesterday, unanimously resolved to address the present letter to you.

"We have, accordingly, to express to you our admiration of the qualities which you displayed, and the services you rendered to us, during the trying scene of the shipwreck. We bear our earnest and unqualified testimony to the caution, vigilance, and unremitting personal attention which you dedicated to the safety of the ship, from the day we were placed under your charge at St. Thomas's up to the hour of our loss; and we thankfully record that you owe to your own energetic and intrepid conduct, the consolation you now enjoy, in saying that, of a hundred and twenty-six souls placed on the brink of eternity, not one life, under the blessing of Almighty God, was lost!

"Your unwearied exertions, together with those of your officers and crew, saved the greater part of our property on board; and your wise and judicious arrangements brought us to this port, in comparative comfort and perfect safety.

"For the obligations we thus lie under to you, joined to the unvaried kindness and attention which we all individually received on board your

vessel, accept of our grateful thanks; and for the heavy losses you have personally sustained, as well as for the deep anxiety of mind which you have naturally suffered, we can only proffer the expression of our heartfelt sympathy.

"To your first officer, Mr. Wilson, to your surgeon, Mr. S. B. Rowland, and to all the other officers under your command, please express our warmest thanks for their unwearied exertions, and obliging conduct, during the whole of the trying period of our loss.

"We sincerely hope that every justice will be done to your merits on your return to England; and with our best wishes for your speedy and safe arrival there, and for your health and prosperity through life,

"Believe us to be,

"Sir,

"Yours very sincerely."

(Signed by all the passengers.)

[*One* passenger, I may observe, refused to sign—our eccentric German, Herr Kriesmar. He did so on *national,* although not rational, grounds, just as he had refused, in making a sketch of the island

of Perez, to introduce the British flag which was flying on a mound near the huts. Kriesmar held it to be, as an inveterate punster said, a *flag*-rant usurpation.]

Captain Sturdee spoke feelingly and well in answer to the few observations addressed to him, and then (a copy of our letter having previously been given to him), he read the following answer:—

"*Campeachy*, 20*th January*, 1849.

"Ladies and Gentlemen,

"From my present state of mind, I feel assured I need hardly ask the indulgence of a brief reply to the letter you have this day presented to me, relative to the late melancholy event.

"The terms of kindness in which it is couched are such, that, had the occurrence even been of a totally different nature, I could not have adequately replied to it; but I do assure you, with feelings of the greatest sincerity, that your approval of my conduct and exertions, since the melancholy morning of our shipwreck, is to me the greatest consolation you could administer, and alleviates, in a great degree, the anxiety which now almost overpowers me.

"I feel that I but express the feelings of my officers, when I return you their heartfelt thanks for your opinion expressed of them. And believe me, your sympathy for my present losses will be ever cherished by me, while I return you from the bottom of my heart, my own for the losses you have sustained, and the privations you have undergone.

"Wishing you health and happiness, and safe and speedy voyages to your destinations, I am, with feelings of the greatest respect,

"Ladies and Gentlemen,

"Your obedient servant,

(Signed) "E. T. STURDEE,

"late Commander of the R.M.S.P. Forth."

"*To the Passengers of the late R. M. S. P. Forth.*"

Captain Sturdee, with his gallant officers now standing aside (we had only two or three chairs for the ladies), I shortly addressed Mr. Molesworth, and then read to him the following letter, drawn up by Mr. Lawrence:—

"Dear Sir,

"We, the undersigned passengers on board the late R. M. S. P. Forth, wrecked on the

Alacranes reef, on the 14th inst., cannot separate without taking this opportunity of recording our high admiration of your conduct in nobly volunteering to cross the reef, on the 14th instant, on which a heavy surf was running, when it was uncertain whether there was water to float even the smallest boat. Your intrepid conduct, whilst it was only what might have been expected from one holding a commission in that service whose prowess is recognised by every nation and in every clime, forms a bright example to others, and will long be gratefully remembered by us, in proving your readiness to risk your own life, in order, if possible, to secure the safety of your fellow passengers, and the rest on board.

"We trust your conduct will not pass unnoticed by those who are able substantially to reward you. Be pleased to accept of this humble, but sincere, expression of gratitude for the services you rendered, not only in the moment of danger, but subsequently in assisting to rescue our property from the wreck.

"That you may rise to eminence in that service, to which we feel sure you will prove an ornament, and that every happiness may attend you through

life, is the earnest wish of your obliged and grateful fellow-passengers."

(Signed by every one, saving and excepting the patriotic Kriesmar.)

"To Lieutenant G. M. F. MOLESWORTH, R.N."

Mr. Molesworth expressed himself in grateful terms for the testimony which we had borne to his exertions, but which he modestly disclaimed, *in toto*, as being due to him; and he then read his answer couched in the following terms:—

"I cannot sufficiently thank you for the kind manner in which you have expressed yourselves in regard to my conduct on the morning of the 14th of January. What little I did was with a view to assist Captain Sturdee in his difficult, responsible situation, and I felt amply rewarded for my exertions by the safety of the passengers over the reef. I am convinced that, had not the duty of the officers obliged them to remain on the ship*, there is not one who would not gladly have volunteered his services on that morning.

* None of the officers, during a wreck, such as the Forth, are permitted to leave the ship, or boat, on other service.

"Wishing you all a safe and pleasant passage to your different destinations, with many thanks,

"I remain,

"Your obliged humble servant,

(Signed) "G. M. F. MOLESWORTH."

The young captain of the brigantine, to whom we lay under so many obligations, was not at the meeting; but the following letter, originally in Spanish, here translated, was read:—

[Translation.]

"Sir,

"We, the undersigned, passengers on board the English steam-packet Forth, which struck on the reefs of the Alacranes, address ourselves to you, in order to manifest—That the promptitude with which you hastened to our assistance; the efficiency and zeal which you displayed, in your efforts to save us; the generosity with which you at once offered us the vessel under your command, with everything you had on board; and the polite attention which we have received from you, not only during our stay at the Island of Perez, but in crossing with you to this port,—have altogether made an indelible impression upon us. We hope,

therefore, that this simple manifestation, aided by your own frank heart, will lead you to comprehend the amount of our gratitude. And we have only further to beg that you will accept, as a slight proof of our acknowledgments, the sum of two hundred dollars.

"We subscribe ourselves

"Your most obedient Servants."

(Signed by the passengers, always excepting the too fastidious Germanic dreamer of dreams, but the otherwise amiable botanist, Herr Kriesmar.)

"Mr. Manuel Batista,
"*Captain of the brigantine Bella Isabel.*"

Thus ended our public meeting, in harmony and good-feeling, with perhaps one or two exceptions; although no one could venture to manifest outwardly any dissatisfaction, when the general sympathies ran so strongly the other way.

Mr. Lawrence and myself, after a due and somewhat minute examination of the whole circumstances of the Forth's case, and Captain Sturdee's

conduct, considered it our duty to express ourselves more clearly on the subject than a mixed company of passengers, among whom foreigners predominated, could do. So, taking Captain Sturdee by the arm, while Messrs. Lawrence and Molesworth, with H— and Jenkins followed, we proceeded from the inn to my *own apartments,* where Mr. Lawrence read, and afterwards delivered to our late commander, a letter thus worded:—

"*Campeachy,*

"20*th January,* 1849.

"Dear Captain Sturdee,

"At a meeting of the passengers of the Royal Mail Steam-packet, Forth, wrecked on the Alacranes Reef, on the 14th instant, held this day, it was resolved to present you and your officers with a letter of thanks, for your kindness and exertions, previously and subsequently to that unfortunate event; but, the majority being foreigners, it was decided not to express any opinion as to the causes which led to it, or the precautionary measures adopted by you to avoid it. We, however, not presuming to suppose that our opinion will have any weight with those by

whom the merits of the case will hereafter be judged; yet, thinking that it may be satisfactory to you to know that some amongst your passengers have perfect confidence in your seamanship, beg to state, that, after having carefully examined the ship's position at noon, on the 13th, the distance run by log subsequently, as compared with the observations taken by yourself at different times, between that hour and midnight, which proved beyond doubt, that the course had been made good; we cannot refrain from expressing our individual conviction, that greater caution than your own could not have been observed; and that the accident was such as scarcely any foresight could have avoided, arising from our experiencing one of those currents which they whose lives have been spent in navigating the Gulf of Mexico justly term 'invincible.' * Had those who may, hereafter, be disposed to question your caution and prudence, been on board from the period of our embarkation under your care at St. Thomas's; had they seen you, as we did, pass sleepless nights, sacrificing all personal

* This was the expression of Captain Batista, a Mexican gulf mariner, when speaking of that sea and its dangers.

comfort, when dangers were at hand; they would hesitate, before condemning you in the present instance. To your coolness and intrepidity we are indebted, under the blessing of God, for the preservation of our lives; and to your subsequent exertions, as well as to your unvaried kindness, attention, and urbanity, we owe many alleviations of those miseries which are the unavoidable concomitants of a shipwreck.

"Feeling, therefore, that a letter, in however strong language couched, cannot adequately express our gratitude to you, it is our intention to request our friends at home to present you with a small token of our high admiration of your skill as a seaman, and of our deep regard for your personal worth.

"We sincerely trust that, on your return to England, you will have a full measure of justice meted out to you, feeling convinced that an impartial examination will fully exonerate you from all blame.

"Deeply sympathising with you in the severe personal losses which you have sustained, and wishing you every happiness and success in your future career, we remain, again tendering you our

best thanks for your great kindness from first to last,

"Your sincere friends,

"Wm. Parish Robertson,
"Edward Lawrence.
"H. Robertson."

The reading of this letter overcame Captain Sturdee's feelings. He retired from the table to another seat, much agitated. Poor fellow! He had indeed had much mental suffering to undergo since the fatal morning of the fourteenth, and a revulsion of feeling, as the drama drew to a close, was natural and inevitable.

Next morning we received the following answer from him:—

"*Campeachy*, 21*st Jantary*, 1849.

"My dear Friends and Passengers,

"I have already expressed in my former letter that you have administered to me the greatest consolation that I could have received in expressing, in the kindest and handsomest terms, that my exertions had met with your approbation.

"This last token of your esteem and regard I am utterly at a loss, how to acknowledge.

"It will be cherished by me to the longest day of my existence, and will be the bright ray for my memory to rest upon, when contemplating the melancholy ordeal through which we have just passed. I am,

"My dear friends and passengers,

"Yours very sincerely,

(Signed) "E. T. STURDEE."

"To Miss ROBERTSON and
Messrs. ROBERTSON and LAWRENCE."

There was yet one more letter which Captain Sturdee received, signed by Lieutenant Densten as well as by Lieutenant Molesworth, which ran as follows: —

"Sir,

"Having been wrecked in the R. M. S. P. Forth, under your command, on the morning of the 14th instant, and having carefully examined the log and chart, we are of opinion that it was only by an unaccountable current, that the ship struck on the Alacranes reef, and we consider that no blame can possibly be attached to you.

"Knowing, as you did, by good sights and mer. alt. the latitude 22° 26' north, and longitude

86° 40′ west at noon, as well as the latitude 22° 33′ north, at 8 hours 50 minutes by the star Aldebaran, and latitude 22° 29′ at 11 hours 4 minutes P.M. by Sirius, fully confirmed you in the correctness of your course, and the distance run by D.R. up to 11 P.M., being such as to require the ship to average upwards of 12 knots, in order to near the reef before day-light. We cannot too strongly express ourselves with regard to the careful manner in which you looked after the safety of the ship, regardless of rest, when near land or shoals, and the seamanlike conduct and coolness displayed by you, when the vessel struck.

"We have the honour to remain,

"Your obedient servants,

(Signed) "F. DENSTEN, Lieut. R.N.,
"G. F. M. MOLESWORTH,
"Lieut. H.M.S. 'Wellesley.'"

"To E. T. STURDEE, Esq.,
late Commander of the R. M. S. P. Forth."

Such were the honourable testimonials which our friend, Captain Sturdee, took with him to England, and well he deserved them.

LETTER XIV.

CAMPEACHY.

Campeachy, 18*th January*
to 3*rd February*, 1849.

On Thursday evening, then, as already stated, we landed at the mole of Campeachy. A great number of persons stood upon it, gazing on us, suspecting, though they could only guess, that we were shipwrecked people.

Finding we had no British consul here, but knowing that Don Joaquin Gutierrez de Estrada was Lloyd's agent, I begged a well-dressed young man to direct us to that gentleman's residence. Several at once offered their services to us for that or anything else we wanted; so after having by their aid procured a custom-house officer to go on board the "Bella Isabel," we proceeded to Mr. Gutierrez's house. We were ushered up to his drawing-room, his place of business being closed. We, (i. e. those who entered), were Captain Sturdee, H—, Mr. Molesworth, the purser, and

myself. La Señora Gutierrez was in the room with some other ladies, and to her care H— was consigned by Mr. Gutierrez, while he stood with us, apart, discussing our business, in the English language, which he speaks perfectly.

Mr. Gutierrez was a tall handsome-looking man, under 40, with a fine, expressive countenance. A gentleman in manner, intelligent as a merchant and man of the world, we soon found that we could not have addressed ourselves to a more ready friend in our distress, nor to a more active agent to fulfil our business requirements. We arranged about discharging the "Bella Isabel;" the procuring of vessels to carry us away from Campeachy; for supplying our pecuniary wants; and for our accommodation at the "Hotel," during our sojourn in the city. Mr. Gutierrez's counting-house was to form the centre of our operations.

In the meantime, H— was entertained by la Señora Gutierrez. This lady, although the mother of many children, was in the prime of life; and in the possession of a beauty in face and form, which shewed as yet, no innovation by Time. The expression of her features was mild, and their cast regular; her eyes black, but her complexion quite fair. Her easy

graceful and quiet deportment, greatly enhanced her outward appearance, and altogether she seemed to be fitted to shine in any society. Of course she stands at the head of that of Yucatan. Mr. Gutierrez has been in the course of his career, but much against his will, governor of his native country. His family is the highest in the place, and some members of it have been leading men in Mexico, more particularly Mr. G—'s brother; so celebrated as a high-minded leader of the patriotic cause; while Mr. G— himself, is worthily transmitting to his sons, the untarnished honours which have uninterruptedly accumulated in his family.

Mr. Gutierrez had sent to the hotel to procure apartments for us; but he could only secure one large bed-room, with four *catres,* or stretchers, so great was the bustle which prevailed in "Don Pedro's" establishment. Yet all the passengers having got on shore, they were, some way or other stowed away, Don Pedro being a man who was never at a loss. Then H—, with Monsieur and Madame D—, and M. A—, were transferred to an untenanted house, near the hotel, as a temporary arrangement. But there was little rest for the "Naufragos" during their first night on shore;

for everywhere the mosquitos were terrible, the noise was great, and the talking was incessant.

The following day, our French friends having left the empty habitation, H— and I took their place. A ghostly looking house it was, but we were too busy at first to do anything in the way of "making things comfortable." We were occupied most of the day, through heat, and amid devouring mosquitos, in writing to England. On the 20th, we were occupied in the way I have detailed in my preceding letter; and on the 21st. we were extremely busy again writing for England, and in preparing copies of all the letters to and from Captain Sturdee, to send to different parties at home. He had chartered a brigantine to take himself, his officers, and ship's servants (steward, &c., &c.), as well as some of his passengers, to the Havana.

Towards eight — a beautiful night, as all the nights in Campeachy seem to be, our correspondence finished, and in Mr. Lawrence's possession, H— and I walked with him, Capt. Sturdee and Lieut. Molesworth, to the pier, to see them off. We parted from them as from friends that we had known all our lives. Had we only seen and

known them, *in the world*—only had an opportunity of an intercourse with them, under the generalities of a London life, for instance, how long might it not have been, ere we should have spoken and thought of each other, as highly esteemed friends! A very few weeks—I might almost say one week had brought about this result. And why? Because our natural feelings had been powerfully roused, and kept in play, by sharing a common danger; a circumstance at once evoking those deeper sympathies of our nature, which, in the common routine of life, lie buried in conventionalities.

And so we parted with our most intimate Avon and Forth friends, of whom I may just say a few more words before now taking leave of them.

When Captain Hast introduced Captain Sturdee to me, he said I should find him "a very worthy man"; adding, that he was truly pleased we were to finish our voyage under one, who, he was sure, would make us comfortable and happy. Captain S— had originally been Captain H—'s first officer, and had obtained a command by his own merits, joined to "the commodore's" earnest recommendation.

At first, I was inclined to think that Captain

Hast had over-rated our new commander's agreeable qualities; but I gradually found that I was mistaken. We are all inclined to be physiognomists; but the science does not always lead us to correct conclusions. Captain Sturdee had a somewhat stern expression of countenance. One morning, in order to keep the Yucatan wreckers, and some of our own men to their good behaviour, our captain armed himself as he best could; then jumping into his boat, he stood upright at the helm, with a very fine beaver hat (evidently not his own), a striped flannel jacket, with tight sleeves, as an outer garment; a flashy red silk sash tied round his waist, to serve instead of braces; a horse pistol stuck into it on one side, a cutlass on the other, with a life preserver slung on his wrist: his penetrating dark eye, and jet black hair, his rather swarthy complexion, and lip, which slightly curling up, shewed his white teeth: behold no bad impersonation of the brigand of "Gentle Zitella."

But we found by degrees, that Captain Sturdee was really a sterling character. In a sailor-like way, he was kind, attentive and polite to all. He was full of joke and fun; was devoted to his duties, and, with gentlemanlike feelings, he possessed a

warm and generous nature. When all the excitement of the shipwreck was subdued, and he had time to consider his altered and disheartening position, the two paramount troubles which oppressed him, were sorrow for his young wife and family, and uneasiness about the safety of his professional reputation. Messrs. Wilson, Mann, Craigie and Barleigh, with Angus, chief engineer, formed a set of unexceptionable officers, as well as pleasing companions. I never met with more agreeable young men in their line. It was during poor Wilson's watch, that the Forth struck, and feeling that the whole responsibility of the shipwreck must rest on his shoulders, he was terribly affected with his misfortune. Although of Herculean frame, and great muscular power, he almost fainted away under his overwrought feelings. How nobly all these fine fellows, as well as our pleasant young middies behaved, from the time the ship struck to the hour of their leaving us, I have already incidentally mentioned. And I can only add, now, that one and all did great honour to the service to which they belong.

Mr. Rowland was a man quite according to my own heart; a true philosopher, with an easy

humour and quaint expression, forming the attic salt with which he seasoned his philosophy.

While he appeared to be careless of pleasing, he pleased everybody; and although possessed of that indescribable unobtrusiveness which characterises a gentleman, he was constantly making you smile or laugh, with his odd way of saying odd things. He affected, if I may so speak, an affected manner, while he was yet the most natural of men. The result was a quiet drollery, which was infinitely amusing.

Mr. Strutt, our purser, who now also left us, was quite a man of business—very kind and polite to us all, and I think I may say, to H— and myself, in particular, after the shipwreck. To be sure, he, as a matter of business, *did* order our great Perezean Museum overboard; but that was quite an unintentional mistake; and the wound which it caused to the scientific collectors is gradually closing up.

Of Mr. Edward Lawrence, I cannot speak too highly. A quietude of manner, a mild sedateness of deportment, obtained for him at once, in our mixed company, his right place. And when by degrees we subdivided, he became a favourite in

his own section, which comprised all the better spirits in the ship. There he opened up into a pleasant companion, social and good-tempered; education and good society, at home, practically improved by widely extended travel, had fitted him for a pleasant and instructive member of any community in which he chose to mix. He had, moreover, a reflective and observant mind, a clear and correct judgment. But it was not till the *shipwreck* that we had an insight into the higher qualities of heart and feelings which distinguished our friend. He was so kind, so thoughtful, so ready to perform all the little services which, under sudden reverses, are so acceptable: he took, from the first, so deep an interest in Captain Sturdee, and in all more immediately affected by the catastrophe of the Forth—he was at once so judicious, and so generous, in his views of the matter—he worked so hard and so willingly, yet so unostentatiously, in bringing affairs to the best possible bearing, both on the spot and looking prospectively to England;—that, altogether, I truly feel a pride in being able to call such a man my friend.

Of Lieutenant Molesworth what am I to say?

His character certainly rose with the occasion to a point far beyond that which we had, at an earlier occasion, anticipated. In a moment, he showed us the good stuff he was made of. You have seen, by our letter to him, how his noble conduct has been appreciated by his fellow passengers. Yet, it was not his gallant bearing as a sailor which most struck me; it was the goodness of his heart, the warmth of his feelings, the generosity of his nature. And although to ourselves, as perhaps among his more intimate friends, his impulses came out most freely, yet, throughout, his energies were given with the promptitude and efficacy of a hearty goodwill.

And so, of Molesworth, Lawrence, Sturdee, and Rowland, we took our leave at the pier, with feelings of affectionate interest, not proportioned to the length of time we had known them, but rather to the moving nature of the circumstances under which our intimacy had grown; to the admirable qualities which each, in his own way, had displayed; as well as to the extraordinary kindnesses and valuable and disinterested services which we had received at the hands of them all.

With respect to our own passage to Vera Cruz, I found we must either proceed early in the morning of the 21st, in a dirty, little, confined cutter of fifty tons burthen, or wait a less-incommodious passage by the "Rafaela," a schooner of one hundred tons, which we were told would sail in about eight days. Both H— and myself required some rest, for she was pretty well "knocked up," and I was still suffering from the combined effects of blows received on board the Forth, and a rheumatic cold caught afterwards; so I determined to wait for the Rafaela. But several of the other passengers, more pressed for time:—Herr L—, Mr. H—, the Admiralty Agent (with the mails), Señor C—, Señor L—, the Spanish Padre, and his companion, went on by the cutter.

Messrs. L— and H— were two of our favourite passengers. With the first, a philosophic German merchant of Mazatlan, the principal Mexican port on the Pacific, intelligent, though quiet—an amusing companion, a musician, a great linguist, and possessed of the minor social qualities,—we had been on cordial terms throughout the voyage. He pressed me hard to visit him at Mazatlan, and held

out tempting inducements; but I could only regret that I had no chance of being able to cross Mexico to the Pacific side, although to do so I very much desired.

I mentioned, at the commencement of these letters, a remarkably pleasant and agreeable young Scotchman, about to launch in the world, in a first-rate mercantile firm in Mexico. This was Mr. H—, who greatly ingratiated himself with every one by his modest deportment, joined to great good sense, and high feeling. His kind attentions to H— and myself during and after the wreck, we shall always gratefully remember. When my bruises rendered it difficult for me to walk, Mr. H— was ever by my side, to assist me. He was, you know, my partner in the Perez Museum, unwittingly committed to the deep.

Mr. C—, a Spanish trader, of Tampico, was a little man in stature, but not a little amusing in his ways. Señor L— (the great, rich, and fashionable tailor—the Stultz of Mexico,) talked always fluently, and *con amore*; generally had a knot of his own countrymen about him, who, although they listened with attention to his diversified, but often "long-spun" yarns, quietly

smoked their cigars while he declaimed, with his vehement but expressive gesticulations. The priest, —who affirmed he had nearly three hundred doubloons (£1,000) abstracted from his portmanteau, after the wreck—was, I fancy, a *rich* priest, and both he and his companion (they came on board at Havana, you may recollect,) being greatly addicted to taciturnity, is all I can say, for I know nothing farther of either. They were quiet and resigned during the shipwreck.

Thus were the Forth's passengers gradually dispersed. By the Rafaela, berths were taken for Monsieur and Madame D— and child: Monsieur A— and his *factotum*, Pedro; Monsieur M— (from Havana); the celebrated Herr F. von Kriesmar; Herr D—, one of our pleasantest friends; young Jenkins, who had enlisted himself under our banners; Mr. P—, a steerage passenger; and finally, for H— and myself. Mr. C—, the German Daguerréotype artist, with his wife, determined to settle, for a season, at Campeachy; he himself, in the first place, returning to the Island of Perez and the wreck, in the hope of recovering from it part of his property, which, unfortunately, constituted his whole stock in trade.

LETTER XV.

THE BROTHERS CAMACHO.

Campeachy, 28th Jan. to 3rd Feb., 1849.

I wish to separate from my further account of Campeachy, in this short letter, some notice of two remarkable brothers, whose acquaintance I made there, considering that they are well entitled to stand out in broad relief among the other "lions" of the place. They appeared to me certainly to constitute the most remarkable social feature of the city wherein they have fixed their final abode on this side the grave.

These brothers—I mean brothers by blood—are *monks*, and Spanish-born. In them, however, we find no trace of the austerity of the cloister. The eldest, about fifty, is the more entertaining; the younger, somewhere about forty-five, the more interesting of the two. Their fraternal affection

forms the most beautiful trait in their characters; and I do believe that the demise of the one would be the death-blow of the other. The elder we found to be overflowing with animal spirits. In his person, he is somewhat plump, and of a clear, ruddy complexion. Then he is amazingly good-tempered, inclining to be garrulous; facetious in his matter; animated in his manner. The younger forms a striking contrast to the elder—tall, thin, and pale; his face, though emaciated, is of an expression so full of meekness, gentleness, and thoughtful intelligence, that you could not contemplate his features, without secret pleasure. And, in low, soft tones, he speaks so mildly and quietly; his saddened eye beams with so much innate goodness, that, when a smile lights up his countenance, your first impulse is inwardly to say—Behold a saint indeed!

The brothers Camacho had travelled over the greater part of Europe, and throughout were favourably known as scientific and learned men. But they apparently became tired of a wandering life; they came at last to Campeachy, and, pleased with the fine climate, and with the character of the kind-hearted and unsophisticated inhabitants,

there they resolved to plant their fig-tree, and sit under it for the remainder of their lives.

Their worth was very soon appreciated in Campeachy. The cure of a limited number of the faithful, with a small chapel, was immediately given to them, and an old mansion hard by was provided for them: there they have remained, beloved by their flock, and esteemed by all, for years; and there they mean to end their days. Indeed, it would be a mournful day for Campeachy, were the brothers Camacho to take their departure, otherwise than in the ripeness of years, by the common course of nature.

Such, in hasty sketch, are "*los buenos Hermanos*" *los Padres Camacho*; and their pursuits are analogous to their respective characters. They equally attend to the service of their little church; they equally care for their little flock; and they are equally zealous in tending the poor, the sick, and the broken in spirit. But all this done, a great deal of spare time still remains on their hands for instruction and amusement, and good use they always make of it; the principal result of their labours being a museum — "the Museum of the Padres Camacho," a very beautiful collection of Yucatan antiquities and objects of Natural History.

The elder Camacho is the principal collector; the younger passionately pursues the science of mechanics. The senior is an indefatigable antiquarian, archæologist, and naturalist. The junior is an enthusiastic mechanician, and a votary of science. The one runs about collecting shells, coins, anatomical remains, antique specimens, minerals, ancient implements of war, skulls (he is a phrenologist), books and bindings, medals, fossils, everything he can lay his hand on that is curious, rare, or antique. The other sits at home (except when his religious and charitable duties, or his brother's collecting mania call him out), poring over mechanical and scientific inventions. Among a variety of labours, I may mention a complete printing press (which he made himself), types, and all, without aid and with rough tools; and from his press (the Padre being of course his own printer), issue homilies, prayers, and instructive pieces, which are distributed among the people, and gladly received.

Some two or three years ago an artist came to Campeachy, to take Daguerréotype likenesses, and he refused to show the Padre Camacho the *interior* machinery, alleging that it would amuse him to

find out the secret of it himself. The Padre's first attempt was on an old Havana cigar-box; and he showed us all his successive efforts, ending in mahogany, from which, at last, he obtained capital likenesses. He made an eight-day clock, of complicated machinery, with curious figures to strike the hours and chimes. And in this way he is constantly engaged in mechanical or scientific pursuits.

The collection of shells in Padre Camacho's Museum is rare, beautiful, extensive, and picturesquely arranged. The shells are worked into a grotto-like conformation, occupying about one-half the room (the Museum is fitted up in two rooms of the Padre's rumbling old house); and they consist of an immense number of specimens, of every class and kind, each forming a compact section or bed of its own, and harmonising prettily with the whole. Round about, on the walls and shelves, are dessicated fish, beetles, and other objects of natural history. Many of the shells have been gathered by the Padres themselves (for their pleasure excursions are in canoes along the shores of the bay, or beyond it); many are presented by numerous sub-contributors; still more

are brought to them by grateful Indians and poor fishermen; the elder Padre *buying* from these classes, whenever the generally scanty state of his exchequer will allow.

The other specimens are not on so extensive a scale as the shells; but they are, notwithstanding, various, interesting, and original; nay, some of them very valuable. They have many highly-curious architectural remains from the celebrated ruins of Uzmál, in Yucatan, and Palénqué, in Tabasco. With such specimens, the English archæologist has been made well acquainted, by Mr. Stephens, in the popular volume which, a few years ago, he published. Still more interesting and complete is the collection illustrative of the arts and religion of the Indians of the whole peninsula, extending to Guatemala and Mexico; and the pleasantest part of all is, that each relique, image, coin, or other object of antiquarian research, has its own particular history, which Padre Camacho (the elder) gives with the greatest *gusto*. Among other things lately sent to him, is a small box, containing some of the calcined bones of an unhappy man who was publicly burnt alive by the Indians, in the course of the war last year; whence

the Padre was led to give me many details of an appalling nature, touching the cruelties which had, during the course of the rising, been perpetrated by the Indians on the whites. These barbarities were, most probably, not without anterior provocation, and certainly have led to subsequent retaliations.

I have only to speak farther of the parsonage in which the brothers Camacho are located. When they took up their abode in it, the house wanted many repairs; but it received none, and it has never been touched since. It is half a ruin, an antiquarian ruin, dear to the brothers as it now stands. The elder will not have the cobwebs removed from his museum, and the younger does not like his *atelier* to be disturbed. Then we saw lying in the back court huge stones, part of the thick and once massive, but now mouldering, walls which ought to protect the house. The padres like to see the stones lying in their place, among a little wilderness of shrubs, undisturbed by the gardener's pruning hook. A favourite monkey disports among the ruins; and no house-dog's bark disturbs their rest at night.

One more trait of these singular, but amiable and interesting brothers. They affect, with pleasant raillery, to laugh at each other's tastes. They tell you of their *petites misères*. "If my brother," says the eldest, "wants to boil some glue, he seizes hold of one of my ancient Indian pots, or of some beautiful, large, strong shell, and these he mercilessly destroys for me, and all for some foolish piece of mechanical work which nobody cares a straw for." The younger smiles. "Well, brother," he answers, "what are your bits of coarse Indian baked clay, or your big shells good for, if not as kitchen utensils? But when you take my best tools to clean out an oyster, or scrape some barbarous image, I may indeed feel some pain."

I stood, towards the close of our pleasant visit, alone with the senior brother Camacho. "Ya veo, padre," I said, "que V. y su Señor Hermano se quieren mucho."—"Es tanto," he replied with vivacity, "que ya toca en debilidad."—That is—the two brothers loved each other so much, that their affection, as the elder would have me believe, bordered on weakness. How amiable

such a weakness! And, at their age, or indeed of any other age, how rare also, and how beautiful!

"Why, Señor Robertson," continued the padre, "if my brother were to say to me: 'Cast your museum into the street,' in a moment there it should go! We have here but one *cōfré* (trunk); we use its contents, so far as they mutually suit us, in common. If my brother has any money, I go to the *cōfré*, take what I want, and never think of telling him. He does the same with mine. We have neither affections nor interests in this world, separate from each other."

We spent four hours with the padres at this our first visit, and they pressed me to make their "*pobre casa*"—their poor house—my own. I was delighted with them, and with every thing around them; and I must observe that they not only gave me all their details in Spanish, but rendered them to H— in French, as good humouredly as if they were doing it for the first time.

Long may these best of brothers and of men live—respected and beloved! Long may they enjoy the delights which flow from so hallowed a

friendship as is theirs for each other! And long may they live to show to others, as they did to us, that it is not always under the gaze of the busy world, that the highest vocations of man may be brought into the most perfect action; that it is not impossible that the nearest approach to happiness may be found, by cultivating, unseen, the best and purest affections of the soul!

LETTER XVI.

CAMPEACHY CONCLUDED.

Campeachy, 28th January,
to 3rd February, 1849.

My twelfth letter brings my memoranda down to the 21st of January, when we parted with the greater, and (with one exception) the better part of our fellow-passengers.

I have said that the nights at Campeachy are beautiful, and as far as I saw, so were all the days: rather uncomfortably warm from 10 A.M. to 2 or 3 P.M., even when we were there; and considering that that was, as a lady most seriously said to me, "*en el rigor del invierno*"—in the depth of winter, I am led to conclude that at "the height of summer," the heat during the middle of the day must be something terrific. But all the year round, I understand, the mornings and evenings are pleasant; in winter they are certainly delicious.

So we went out in the morning, stayed at home during the heat of the day, walked or drove out in the afternoon, and then, either seated on chairs placed on the *trottoir* at our door, or inside, with our door wide open; we passed the evening till it verged upon midnight.

We had made our "home" of a larger habitation in a quiet corner, near the principal church, and within a stone-cast of Don Pedro's hotel. In two days it was transformed into a somewhat pretentious residence. On Monday (the 22nd) several dark urchins began to pop in upon us, some with chairs, others with *esquineras* (ornamental tables for the four corners of the room); one with plated candlesticks, another with cut crystal shades, and so forth. Then one fellow, stouter than the others, brought a handsome mirror, thus gradually filling our *sala* with necessary as well as ornamental furniture. All was sent by our kind friends Mr. and Mrs. Gutierrez; and then the renowned Don Pedro, our hotel-keeper (we were still an off-shoot of his establishment), felt his *amour propre* touched. So he sent us a splendid marble slab table for the centre of our great room, card tables, more chairs ("*muy lindas! muy lindas!*" as he called them,

"beautiful! beautiful!"), mosquito curtains, etc. We had cut decanters, glasses, silver-lid jugs, plates, "monkeys" (to keep the water cool), bedroom furniture, every thing. And after H— had arranged all in due order (our various vases shewing a magnificent display of flowers, gathered in the open air, "in the depth of winter!"), we felt we had made a wonderful change from Perez Island and the "Bella Isabel" to "our house" in Campeachy.

We were assiduously attended *at home* by Don Pedro's staff of servants. Mrs. Gutierrez sent us many delicacies; among others, every morning, at seven o'clock precisely, a little black page was at our door with a *posillo de chocolate* for the *Niña*.* At the hotel we only dined; for after the first few days Don Pedro provided breakfast for us at home.

On Monday, still the 22nd, Herr D— prevailed on me to allow him to drive H— and myself in a phaeton two or three miles out of the town. The country all around Campeachy is pretty and picturesque; some parts very highly so: green

* *Niña*: literally "a female child," but conventionally "a young lady."

trees every where; and thus we found it after passing through the *puerta* or gate of Guadalupe. But the hovels and their inmates squatting about in all directions, as we got to the outskirts of the intramural town, above all the poor and degraded Indians who can scarcely be called better than the beasts of burthen of the country, and whom you constantly meet bending under their loads, are anything but agreeable objects in the picture.

The country was fine—the road was the reverse. The one which Mr. D— chose (for he soon got entangled in crosses and lanes), was an ugly continuation of land reefs, scarcely less dangerous than those of the Alacranes. Up and down, swinging, creaking, bumping, slowly we advanced in our crazy old phaeton, till I veritably began to quake for our limbs, if not for our lives. It grew quite dark upon us, and I could stand it no longer. So I hired an Indian *pilot* on the way, who presently steered us into less dangerous ground, I walking ahead, looking out for the rocks; and under this new guidance, I was glad to get home at eight instead of six o'clock as we had proposed.

On Tuesday, the burning sun kept us within doors till the afternoon, when the ever-attentive

Don Pedro volunteered to procure for us from the commandant, the necessary permission to walk round the rampart of the city, with mine host himself as our cicerone.

The walls were much damaged by the Mexicans in 1842; but we found them completely repaired, and the whole now in good condition. The bastions are mounted with heavy ordnance, and mortars; and altogether, the walls form a handsome fortification.

The walk round the rampart is delightful, and not a little picturesque. The breeze here meets you with all its delicious freshness. At every turn you have a new view: the sea, the ships, the shores, the valleys, the "Cerros," or hills,— the rich foliage, the villas and cottages, the palm trees and acacias form the surrounding and exterior beauties of the panorama: while within, we had a bird's eye view of the streets, rectangular throughout, as, making the circuit of the walls, we obtained an ever-varying aspect of the town. The walk was certainly much to be admired; and Don Pedro was grandiloquent in his praises of what clearly appeared to him to be the *ne plus ultra* of nature and of art: viz., the shores, the

city, and the ramparts of the place of his adoption —Campeachy, in Yucatan. He never ceased pouring forth his eulogiums, during the hour and a half which he employed in our perambulation. At the end of each explanation with which he favoured us, he invariably concluded with "*Oh! es lo mas hermoso, señor; muy lindo! muy lindo!*" (beautiful! beautiful!)

On the 24th, three more of our companions in shipwreck left Campeachy for New Orleans, their original destination. One, with an enormous squint, was an important, but an intelligent bustling Frenchman, speaking good English; his calling that of a respectable shopkeeper. Another, long established there, was a discontented, hard-headed Scotchman; who grumbled at every thing, and jealously watched, with every body, his own importance. The last of the three went, among the Spaniards, by the name of "*El Sucio*" (the filthy); a title which he earned and supported with most disgusting assiduity.

On Friday, we walked to the Alameda, and found it a new-looking straight public walk. But apparently nobody goes near it; at least, not in the depth of winter. Along the whole length,

double rows of orange trees have been planted; under which, at regular intervals, were cool seats made of brick and mortar, whitewashed, and with backs and arms in form of long sofas; *still*, the fashionable Campechanos do not patronize the Alameda as a promenade.

We next went to Señor Macgregor's quinta, or villa, close by. The grounds, although formally laid out in Dutch fashion were pretty, owing to the number of trees and evergreen shrubs, and more especially to the parterres crowded with fine flowers. The *Macgregŏré's*, as the name is pronounced in Campeachy, are Yucatecos of Scotch-Spanish descent. One of the brothers is the Spanish consul, with whom, as a brother of the craft, I got well acquainted.

During the three following days, I was mostly confined to my bed. However, on the 30th, I was able to take a drive among the pretty *quintas* which lie scattered about the environs. At one of them, H— was presented with two magnificent bouquets, containing, among numerous kinds of beautiful flowers, a profusion of almost every species of the rose; bouquets which "in the depth of winter" would, in Covent Garden, have been worth money.

On Thursday, the 1st of February, we made an excursion to the village of Lerma, two leagues from Campeachy. The road, without interruption, runs close by the beach, and forms a charming drive. On the one side, you are close upon a fine wood all the way; many of the trees with pendant flowers, the shrubs in blossom, and each, and every tree and plant in fresh, green, and luxuriant foliage. The mimosa tribe is here in all its beauty, and in all its interminable variety. Then on the opposite side we had the beach, here and there rocky, but more generally smooth, and running up to a sward, or to patches of trees, whose roots were almost laved by the rippling and subdued waters of the Mexican gulf. The road, altogether, is romantic. Lerma itself is a pretty little village; chiefly inhabited by Creole fishermen and their families, intermixed with a good many Indians. We left our *volante*, and walked about for a couple of hours. We went into the cottages, inspected the handsome nets which the villagers themselves made, and talked, and made ourselves entirely at home, with the simple and primitive inhabitants of Lerma. Then we strolled along the beach, picking up shells, and fine spe-

cimens of sea-weed (to carry to England), after which we took our departure.

Deviating from the sea-side road, in order, on our return, to visit an *hacienda*, belonging to one of the Gutierrez family, we got into the thickest part of the wood, where the sylvan scenery improved at every step we took; the road got more umbrageous, the woodland more luxuriant, till we emerged into an open space, where stood the rustic mansion belonging to the *hacienda*. There were good out-houses, and the place denoted peace and plenty. We walked on the *azotea* of the house; plucked some flowers from the garden, as we retired; and again plunging into the wood, we presently came to the *quintas*, acacias, out-skirt cottages, palm and banana trees. Having started at six in the morning, we got home by eleven to breakfast, highly pleased with our morning's ramble.

The theatre at Campeachy — as handsome a one as you will see in most of the provincial towns in Europe,—having this season, by boarding over the pit, been turned into a ball-room, and that a splendid one, a grand subscription ball was specially got up for us, on Friday, the 2nd,

to bring together the *belles* of Campeachy. La Señora Gutierrez placed her box at our disposal, offering to accompany us, and, well pleased, we accepted her offer. We went, like many others, as mere spectators; but the younger ladies and gentlemen soon sallied forth from the boxes, and mixed in the dance. The space was ample, allowing thirty or forty couples to stand up without crush or inconvenience. All the lower tier, the only *fashionable* tier of boxes, was crowded with the *élite*; and seats were also provided for a proportion of the fair *danseuses*, in what was properly the *room*. They were all dressed *à l'Européenne—très comme il faut*; but then both ladies and gentlemen danced with an imperturbable gravity, and unbroken silence, a formality which had a droll effect in a ball-room. I saw many pretty faces, and fine figures, and, what one would scarcely have looked for, the women in general were of fair complexion; but after all, to my mind, Madame Gutierrez carried off the palm.

As the time was drawing near when we were to leave Campeachy, where, in consequence of the non-arrival of the Rafaela, we had been detained so long, we accepted, on Sunday, an invitation

from our kind friends the Gutierrezes to take a family dinner with them. It was a capital one, comprising a variety of novel dishes, all good, and well cooked. Moreover, we had "Sillery" champagne, with other good wines, and prime India pale ale. At the table were Miss Gutierrez, a very pleasing and pretty girl of twelve, and half a dozen of the younger branches, down to three or four years. Mr. and Mrs. Gutierrez were, as may be supposed, fond parents, and, perhaps to my strict notions, somewhat inclined to spoil the little ones. Then we had Mr. Gutierrez's sister, an agreeable, motherly person, and some other pleasant relations. The dinner commenced at four P.M.; and ere the dessert, the *café*, and the *chasse-café* had succeeded the regular courses, seven o'clock had arrived, when we took our departure.

We made some other acquaintances among the kind inhabitants of Campeachy—the Preciatts, the other leading family there; and more particularly our "*vecino*," our next-door neighbour, Don N. Casasúz, who showed us many attentions, and introduced us to some of his fashionable friends. It was he who originated the subscription (bachelor's) ball for us. And yet our "*vecino*" claimed no

higher rank than that of shopkeeper and trader. But this class—uniting wholesale and retail business—forms the aristocracy of Yucatan society, as it does in almost all parts of Spanish America. Mr. Casasúz was one of the leaders of the *haut ton*, spoke English and French well; danced well; and as a fashionable, not only danced well himself, but played well to others, when a musician was wanted.

On Monday the 5th, after many leave-takings, Messrs. Gutierrez and Preciatt seeing us into our canoe, at the Mole, we embarked on board the schooner "Rafaela," at 5 p.m., bound for "Vera Cruz." We were 17 passengers, to be stowed away in ten close berths, all in one public cabin; so of course it was the old story of men and women higgledy, piggledy, passing three or four successive nights in their clothes. The skipper, Don José Méstré, was a pleasantly talkative old Catalán, who had been 29 years in the Mexican gulf traffic; and who, notwithstanding, was still timid about its reefs, rocks, and other hidden dangers. These, in fact, abounded in the passage we still had to make; and as "burnt children dread the fire," we were not, in general, without our misgivings, as to a safe arrival. Poor Madame

D— in particular, too naïve ever to disguise her fears, reiterated her inquiries the whole way, always quietly and placidly put to Captain Méstré, "if he thought there was no danger?"

Our old bad luck attended us, in regard to the wind. We fell in with what is called "the tail of a norther"; not precisely the formidable gale itself, but the effect of it on the circle surrounding its heaviest range. The first night we could make little head against it; so honest Méstré came to anchor. We all retired about ten o'clock, some sooner: the floor of the cabin was covered with carpet bags, portmanteaus, trunks, a mattrass or two, and other heterogeneous packages, called into requisition as make-shifts for beds. I had a berth, which I found the first night, so disagreeably close, that I abandoned it to one more impervious than myself in pores and olfactory nerves, and I joined those on the floor. Poor H— was also very uncomfortable—smothered during the day, and through the night, in a dirty little cabin, with sixteen men and women (many of them not of the nicest) around her; some snoring, some groaning, and now and then one or other of them smoking a paper cigar in the middle of the

night! What a relief, always, when daylight returned to us!

On Tuesday, the 6th, we made some considerable way; but the rough sea brought much sickness to almost all on board during the day, after little rest through the night; though for myself, I slept on the floor, as comfortably as a prince. On Wednesday it was still rough, but we began to approach Vera Cruz. Thursday, fine weather brought us a dead calm. In the evening, however, a slight breeze set in; and before dusk, we had a distinct view of the peak of Orizáva, and of the "Cofré" of Perote! the tops of the two celebrated mountains in this quarter of the globe. By nine, P. M., we saw the revolving light on the castle of San Juan de Ulloa; but our wary skipper would not venture near the dangerous roadstead. We kept off and on all night; and it was 10, A.M., Friday, the 9th, ere we dropped our anchor under the lee of the castle, and in the midst of the shipping. In a quarter of an hour more, two or three boats came off; one with a gentleman, a native of Vera Cruz, from the house of Messrs. Manning, Mackintosh, and Co.; and with the compliments of Mr. J—, the resident

partner, begging us at once to proceed to his house. Don Pepe (our conductor), soon ordered all our luggage into the boat: in ten minutes more we touched Mexican ground; and in five minutes after, we were in the spacious court-yard of Messrs. M—, M—, and Co's residence.

Such have been our adventures from Southampton to Vera Cruz. They must either have had something of the varied and the stirring in them, or I must have been very prolix—for lo! (with H—'s moderate aid), I have extended the diary of our proceedings to over two hundred pages! I fear I must have been too minute; but as you insisted on knowing everything about us—"all particulars"—you have some part of the blame to lay on your own shoulders, if you have found my account tedious.

Here then finishes the first section of our travel. In our second, you will no doubt find how we get on from Vera Cruz to Mexico. And from Mexico—who knows whither?

LETTER XVII.

VERA CRUZ.

Vera Cruz, Monday, 12th February, 1851.

YES; mankind, as I have said before, is divided into two classes—the stay-at-home, and the go-abroad; the stick-fast and the vagrant; and although I have confessed that the first of the two are the most comfortable, I am not, on a retrospection of the excitements of travel, inclined to wonder that wandering leads ardent minds to a distaste for the monotony of still life. Dr. Johnson says, that "matrimony has many sorrows; but celibacy no joys;" and, in a limited and lower sense, in such wise I may argue of the traveller, and the home-bred. For if, indeed, excitement be a state of our nature which the complete enjoyment of our being demands, then it is certain that he who travels *not*, lacks many of those joys which fall to the lot of him who does travel.

Who could possibly have anticipated—I am sure I never could—that I should run out an account of our passage from Southampton to Vera Cruz, a passage ordinarily of five-and-thirty days, to nearly the length of a fashionable volume? And yet how much and how many things have I suppressed that, as they occurred, I thought interesting? Look back, and observe, after all, how rapidly I have sometimes had to give you my sketches; how many touches, to make anything approximate to a picture, I have omitted; how many diversified incidents, to which I have scarcely alluded, because I feared I was becoming tedious, and because I was frightened at the growing bulk of my journal. Two hundred pages! to say what most stay-at-homes (and, I confess, many others who are *not* stay-at-homes), would have expected to be comprised in—"After a boisterous passage of sixty-two days, during which we changed steamers, and were wrecked (*vide* newspapers), we arrived here on the 9th instant."

How irresistible is Fate! How inscrutable the decrees which control our ways, direct our course, and throw us upon the most unforeseen events! I look back upon the last six months, and find that

nothing has happened to me as I anticipated it *would* happen: a succession of events instead has has come to pass, which, looking forward, would have appeared to me as nothing better than the chaotic incoherences of a troubled dream!

I have said that nothing has come to pass as I anticipated: one special exception, however, is our safe arrival in Mexico, which I indeed willed, yet which, in ways altogether unforeseen by me, has come to pass. Still, how do I know, had the intermediate events been altogether different—had they followed the different course which I had anticipated—whether the ultimate result would have been my arrival here or not? Thus, we must have a will—a settled and definite rational purpose—doing our best to work it out, and not complaining of the intermediate accidents and incidents which are brought about by a controlling Power infinitely higher than that of short-sighted man!

Leaving on one side, however, the deeper themes, which have relation to the things "beyond the visible diurnal sphere,"—themes on which I have just ventured slightly to touch, because, since our shipwreck, my mind has communed more than

usually, with those great interests which lie on the other side of this life; descending again to its ordinary level, let me chronicle anew, that we finished our voyage to Vera Cruz on Friday, the 9th of February, taking up sixty-nine days, instead of thirty-four, being one day more than double the number allowed by the time tables of the Company; and assuredly embracing more than double the number of incidents which any thirty-four days might reasonably be expected to include.

Vera Cruz being reached, I may take leave, for the present, of the residue of our shipwrecked fellow-passengers, who came by the Rafaela, and who dispersed on her coming to anchor.

M. A—, as a rich merchant in Mexico, was considered the head of our foreign passengers. He had earned his fortune more by dint of caution and economy, than by bold or active enterprize; and if, as I have been told, he was once in the Imperial army, I can only say that the fire of the soldier had now evidently given way to the frigidity of the merchant. It has not been a very rare case, either in England or in France, since the commencement of our long peace, to see the love of glory pale before the still more exciting

passion for gold—to see one who in his youthful career had started with the sword, lay down the weapon of the warrior for the pen of the trader—to exchange the snorting charger in the field, for the stool and the desk, in the mansion of Mammon in the city.

Returning to M. A—: he was a quiet, unobtrusive man, somewhat advanced in years; unmarried; not forgetting (it is a mercantile trait) number one; of polite, almost obsequious manners; but never mixing much, nor shining in general conversation. He had a most excellent servant with him—a character—Pedro, "Don" Pedro, he was often called; who waited on his master with the utmost deference; but who laid down the law with an easy, yet not unbecoming familiarity, with the Spanish passengers: he read, and played chess. At the wreck, he was a hero; but M. A— was exclusively his idol. While the latter was helpless, and in undoubted trouble at the scene which was passing before us, Pedro fought for his property; ransacked the wreck to get at it, regardless of danger; flew, when we landed at the little island, to secure the least uncomfortable corner for his master; and then

worked, during the whole two days, in rescuing from damage the saturated contents of his master's trunks, every one of which "Don" Pedro had saved. He was one of the best servants I ever saw, and gave me the idea, that M. A— must certainly be a good master. He appeared, indeed, duly to appreciate the good qualities of Pedro; and master and man seemed counterparts of, and exactly to understand, each other.

Monsieur and Madame D— were *protegés* of M. A—, and they took up their quarters with him in his partner's house in Vera Cruz. A pleasant couple: he, an intelligent French doctor, she, a kind-hearted and unsophisticated Creole lady of Chihuahua, a remote province* of that name, now the most northerly of Mexico, where he married his comely, naïve, young little wife. Both of amiable temper, they were fond of each other and of their little child, the amusement of the other passengers. Madame rather piqued herself on her knowledge of French, and preferred that idiom to Spanish in her conversation.

Of Herr Kriesmar I have not much more to say.

* Remote *now*, because it lies contiguous to New Mexico ceded to the United States.

He was a good deal perplexed, and his patience sorely tried by some of the tricks played upon him by two or three of our young men. At Don Pedro's hotel in Campeachy he slept in a hammock. During the utter darkness of the night, his companions in the room got up and began, in total silence, to rock him vigorously in his moveable bed. He thereupon called loudly to Don Pedro. Next, an inoffensive missile was thrown at him, when he started up, and called wildly out: "Mon Dieu! c'est un tremblement de terre! c'est un tremblement de terre!" He tried in vain to get to the door calling for help on Don Pedro. The old black porter—for Don Pedro would not stir—at last appeared with a light. All seemed to be sound asleep save the affrighted K—. The porter told him testily that he bad been dreaming (no uncommon thing with him in a psychological sense), and sharply required him not to disturb his neighbours any more. So the herbalist tried to compose himself to sleep, and in the morning anxiously inquired of all, if they had not felt the "*tremblement de terre.*"

The day we landed at Vera Cruz, he started off, as he had done at Campeachy, on a botanising

expedition, and I have heard nothing of him since.

Of our friend Herr D— I shall probably have to speak anon. And as young Mr. Jenkins (we always called him by his second Christian name of "Agapito"), was now completely one of our own family —for he had lived with us in Campeachy, and now had a room at Mr. Jonson's—I shall take leave of him, when we bid adieu to Vera Cruz. Pratt, the young miner, was sent off to the capital by his employers, and is, no doubt, by this time on his way to one of the mining districts.

I have omitted to say that, as we approached Vera Cruz, we had a fine view of the coast, of the open harbour and shipping, and of the fortress of San Juan de Ulloa which occupies an island less than half a mile from the shore, and not far from the low lying "Isla de Sacrificios," with its surrounding *arrecifes*. Expecting to see interminable sand-banks on the coast as far as the eye could reach, we were agreeably surprised to find that they only extended something less than two leagues on either side, beyond which the country was green, with small trees apparently lining the coast. The town also looked a great deal better

than we had expected to find it. Indeed it had a handsome and imposing appearance; but with San Juan de Ulloa, of which, among Spaniards, I had heard so much, I was quite disappointed. It presented a black, dilapidated, ruinous look, without any of that frowning grandeur with which I had invested in my own mind, this celebrated fortification.

We landed at the mole,* one of the handsomest and most commodious I have seen. It runs out from a fine portico way, along one side of which lies the custom-house, a handsome pile, and along the other a range of excellent warehouses. The pier, finely paved with large flag stones, is sufficiently long for a pleasant promenade; and its great width very much enhances the beauty of the structure. The extremity from the shore or terminus is covered by a circular bulwark, having stone-seats inwards for the accommodation of the public. The whole length of the *muelle* is 700 feet. The cargoes of merchant vessels are discharged into lighters or into boats, and from them landed at the *muelle* by means of stairs and cranes. There is ample space and convenience for dispatch by the custom-house officers, before removal of the goods, in carts, to the merchants' warehouses, or

* The Spanish *Muelle* means, at once, a breakwater and a pier.

on the shoulders of brawny porters to those of the custom-house. Altogether, the pier and custom-house of Vera Cruz form a business-like and handsome entrance to the principal port and mercantile depôt of Mexico.

Passing through the portico, we got into a large, dilapidated, and unfinished square; thence into one of the regular streets; and immediately afterwards, as I have told you, we were in the front court of the spacious mansion of Messrs. Manning, Mackintosh, and Co. There we were accosted, in an easy way, by an English gentleman, who expressed his regret that Mr. J— (the partner of the house) had been suffering all the morning from *jaqueca* (sick headache); but that he hoped to be able to join us at dinner. "Meantime," added Mr. Wiseman, the gentleman in question, "allow me to show you your rooms. I am only, like yourselves, a visitor here; but I can assure you that you may, like me, feel yourselves quite at home."

In these best houses, in Spanish America, the ground-floor is dedicated to business; the *altos*, or upper floors, form the dwelling part. Many have *entresols*, which are sometimes let, but by good

families generally appropriated to their own use. Here, in Mr. J—'s house (as in all others of the first class), the rooms are very spacious, and the lofty ceilings are admirably adapted to a warm climate. So we were lodged in commodious bed-rooms, rejoicing, not a little, to find ourselves once more surrounded by home comforts, valued always, but more especially abroad. At three P.M., we found Mr. J— in his principal drawing-room, pretty well recovered. We adjourned to the dining-room, whence, after partaking of the best fare we had seen for many a day, followed up by a glass or two of wine, we returned to the *salon* for coffee and a cooler atmosphere.

Mr. J— was the pleasantest of young bachelors, and the kindest of hosts. He had not only provided for H— and myself; but finding I had an *attaché* in young Jenkins, with whose father (Dr. J—) he was well acquainted, he immediately assigned him a room, to the no small contentment of Agapito. So we were all as comfortable and as much at home, in an hour or two, as if we had been friends of long standing. Mr. Wiseman, something under the middle age, turned out to be a first cousin of the celebrated Dr. Wiseman, now a

bishop *in partibus*, and one of the most talented and learned Roman Catholics in Europe. I had had an opportunity, some years before, of making the bishop's acquaintance at Oscott, and, although slightly, with both pleasure and profit to myself.

Mr. W— was on his way to Europe, and at Vera Cruz had been detained for a month by the loss of the Forth, in which he had intended to go home. But such was the easy nature of the man, that a month was to him what a day would have been to another. His residence, connected with mining affairs, in which he was engaged, had been for years at Guanajuato. He determined, at last, to pay a visit to his friends in Europe, giving on his way, a couple of weeks to the city of Mexico. There his friends were delighted to see him, and he to see them; so, from two weeks, he prolonged his stay to thirteen months! And when the packet arrived at Vera Cruz, I am persuaded that had I said to him: "Let us remain another month here;" he would assuredly have answered, "With all my heart!" then have taken up his hat, lighted his Havana *puro*, and gone out to his accustomed stroll to the pier. Happy, happy temperament!

The Wisemans—listen to me as patiently as

Mr. W— himself would; the Wisemans form one of many distinguished Roman Catholic families which, towards the close of the last century, emigrated from Ireland, on account of the "Troubles" of 1782, to Cadiz, where they have produced an extraordinary number of eminent men, now to be found, both in and out of Spain. The principal of these families were those of O'Donnell, Murphy, Wiseman, Barron, O'Higgins, O'Shea, O'Leary, Lynch, O'Neale, O'Gorman, Lonergan, and others, every one of which has produced men of distinguished reputation in Spain, in the Americas, in England, and elsewhere. All the names I have quoted must be familiar to your ears. Of the eleven families I have enumerated, I have become acquainted with members of seven of them, and with the history, less or more, of all of them. Their head-quarters have always been in Andalusia, where they have long continued to form, and still constitute a small aristocratic colony, too remarkable to be passed over in silence.

Our friend, Mr. W—, then, was one of this talented fraternity, and, as a matter of course, he was shrewd, intelligent, and a man of the world.

He was a good, easy man, and it was alleged that he had allowed himself to be too much Mexicanised. I only found him the more agreeable and the more piquant, on that account. He married, in early life, a handsome young Mexican lady of good family, and, unhappily, losing her at an early age, he has since figured as a great favourite with the fair sex, a widower. Mr. W— had a right appreciation of the *dolce far niente* which I think myself, if not carried too far, is really one of the sweets of life. At any rate we fraternised at once; and I found him, during the short time we were together, a delightful companion, and a most instructive friend.

As H— and I had entirely got over the fatigues of our journey, Mr. J— proposed to amuse us for an hour, on the evening of our arrival, by taking us to his box at the theatre. Thither we went, accompanied by Mr. W— as well as by "Agapito," who seldom liked to lose sight of us. The theatre is a very fair one indeed; but I cannot say much for the *comicos* we saw.

Saturday, the 10th. I took a look at the *Villa Rica de la Vera* (*verdadera*) *Cruz*—the wealthy town of the True Cross. It is in some places

dilapidated, but I did not find it at all deserving of the bad character which is generally given to it. At any rate, it is much better than many of the towns of some celebrity in Spanish America which I have seen. The Spaniards are famous for *building* strong and substantial houses, but as for *repairing*, they seem scarcely ever to think of it. Thus after a century or two the house begins to get shabby, goes on to fail, shews symptoms of decay, and at last, from pure want of "a stitch in time," goes to ruin. The process is not often interrupted, and the ruined remains of the house not always removed. Bare walls, in many a town, are left to proclaim that *there* once stood a house. The cause of this is mainly to be found in the mode of renting. The landlord scarcely ever disturbs his original lease with a tenant. But it is not the custom for landlords to repair, and the tenants at will do not choose to incur the expense. Then many houses belong to corporations, to the church, to *testamentarias*, executorships, something almost equal to the blessing of being in chancery. The landlords never raise the rent; the tenant does not even *clean* his house till after a long series of years; and sooner than clean and repair it

himself, he moves off to another habitation. Thus repairing is not the common custom, and hence the general aspect, in many Spanish towns, of gloominess, uncleanliness, oldness (which, to make a word, may be termed used-up-ness), and decay. There are many exceptions to the general rule; more especially in those cases, where English residents, and English capital, and English *comforts* have found their way. Indeed, since the emancipation of the colonies, a most decided improvement has taken place in the aspect of the cities and towns generally. The much maligned Vera Cruz is one of those which shewed to me at every turn, in the better quarters of the port, handsome houses in tenantable order. The English have set the example, and including at once proprietors and tenants, it has been largely followed by the people.

LETTER XVIII.

VERA CRUZ CONTINUED.

Vera Cruz, Tuesday, 13th February, 1851.

EVERY one tells you, before your arrival, that Vera Cruz stands in the centre of barren, sandy, desert hills, which spread for leagues around—sand, sand—nothing but sand. In short, the place where the catch of "White sand, and grey sand!" was undoubtedly composed. Mr. J— proved to us the fallacy of these loose (sand) asseverations, by taking us out for a drive on Saturday afternoon, the 10th.

At first, it is unquestionable, the *medanos,* or sand-banks, were enormous; and, as such, far from being ugly, they looked picturesque. I never had a clear idea of Egypt till that day. The dikes, or rather roof-like sides of the finest white sand, rising in a pyramidical form were truly those of the Egyptian desert. The sands are thus thrown into their glacis-like forms by the northerly winds,

which blow on the land, and impetuously sweep with them the fine sands of the beach, to form the accumulations inland. They are always increasing, and there seems to be no way of diminishing the evil, for such no doubt it is. The *medanos*, or sand accumulations at large, rising into these glacis shapes, or spreading evenly on the ground, embrace, I should think, a circuit of a league round Vera Cruz. I repeat, however, that in the still evening they were highly picturesque and impressive—a wonder to the eye. How our mules got through the sandy breadth which stretches beyond the *medanos*, is an enigma. But we had not advanced much more than a mile, when the sand *hills* were left behind us, and the sand *roads* grew gradually less deep and toilsome. At a distance of about two miles from the *medanos*, as I think, we had vegetation on every side; and ere we had advanced a league from Vera Cruz, we were in fine green lanes! The mules moved briskly over the good road; beautiful and varied sorts of flowering creepers depended gracefully from the trees, and, ever and anon, formed a canopy over our heads; while flowers and shrubs, on either side, gave fragrance to the air. The

parasitical air plants and others added beauty to the trees to which they were attached, or round which they twined; and the mingling verdant productions of nature gave a constantly changing interest to the drive.

On Sunday, we had a variety of calls, and among the pleasantest, was that of Colonel Robles, Commandant in Vera Cruz, and a rich mine proprietor, universally allowed to be one of the very best specimens of the Mexican nation. Colonel Robles has a frank, soldier-like bearing; is of well-tried and acknowledged bravery; full of energy, and possessing talents of a high order, particularly as an engineer. His conversation is lively and interesting; and from his peculiarly emphatic, yet rapid mode of speaking, carries the listener quite along with him. Altogether, first impressions are in favour of the general voice which pronounced Colonel Robles as deserving the esteem and respect accorded to him, at once by his own countrymen and by all classes of foreigners.

Another pleasant acquaintance we made was Mr. H—, partner in a mercantile house here.

Mr. Giffard, Her Majesty's Consul, also called;

and, finally, we made the acquaintance of Mr. M—, a wealthy and leading merchant, and a great friend of Mr. J—. Mr. M— is a native of St. Kitt's, but has spent many years in the United States; hence, his manners and feelings appear to be rather those of a well-educated and liberal American, than of an Englishman.

This day (Sunday, the 11th,) the Constitution of the free Federal State of Vera Cruz was sworn to, and it was ushered into life with a political flourish of trumpets, according to the general custom; that is, a *fête* was prepared for the worthy Vera Cruzanos. Many constitutions have I seen in my day sworn to throughout South America; and straightway sworn *at*, and abolished, to make room for some other, having more parts, sections, chapters, and articles than its predecessor, and, consequently, more difficult to be practically carried out. However, if the one given to Vera Cruz be really calculated to advance the interests of that state, which, I fear, is problematical, I can only hope that it may have a long and sedate life, instead of, as in many paper constitutions which I have seen, a short life and a merry one—that is, confined to the day in which they were

ushered in with ringing of bells, a *feu de joie*, the beating of drums, fireworks, and illuminations.

In such fashion was the Constitution of Vera Cruz announced, soon after daylight, the drums, review of troops, bands of music, etc., being given to the earlier part of the day.

We spent part of the forenoon in viewing the preparations and the holiday folks, taking a sight also of the troops (which you will not suppose equalled, in number or appointments, those of the Queen's household); and, after dinner, Mr. M—, being of our party, we walked to that gentleman's farm, on the outskirts of the town. It is yet in process of formation; but it attracts much attention, from being all—house, farm, garden, and grounds—in a half United States, half English style, and contrasting strongly with everything around. It will be a pleasant and handsomely finished villa; but I question if the house will suit a Vera Cruz climate. Among some capital farm stock, are cows of good breed, including an *Alderney*, and some remarkably fine horses. The wall garden, already formed, with the rest of the establishment, when finished, will make a complete, extensive, and

pleasant whole, for the imitation of the rich Vera Cruzanos.

The suburb by which we went to the farm, is in a considerable state of dilapidation: and something in keeping with these, is the abandoned railway from Vera Cruz to Mexico. The length laid down, which we crossed, is to be reckoned by *yards*, instead of *miles*; yet, I am told, that the preliminary expenses and materials purchased amount in cost to nearly a million of dollars!

In the evening we went, by invitation, to Mr. and Mrs. U—, whose large house forms a corner of the square, to see the fireworks and illuminations. Mr. U—, a German, is resident partner in the house of Messrs. B—, J—, and Co., and Mrs. U— is daughter of Señor Gomez Farias, whose name is well known in Europe, as connected with the first movements towards Mexican Independence. We found a large party assembled—young and old; in fact, a *tertulia* on an extensive scale, music and dancing, together with what forms no part of the old Spanish *tertulia*, refreshments, both first-rate and abundant. The *suite* of rooms was very handsome, and was furnished with taste, and European elegance. Mrs. U— is an

accomplished woman, and a good linguist. Her brother, Mr. Gomez Farias, who was not long since in England connected with the Bonds' question, was also present; a handsome young man, with a courtier-like air, and speaking English quite well.

The fireworks, although I cannot say equal to the Surrey Zoological, gave universal delight to the crowd assembled; and the handsome square showed off to great advantage, under favour of the pyrotechnical display.

On Monday, the 12th, Mr. and Mrs. H— arrived from Mexico, to go to England by the packet, and they had, like ourselves, and as old friends of the house, rooms provided for them by Mr. J—. They arrived early in the morning, by a "*litera*," the gentleman done up, and the lady *en dishabille*; but when I met her in the drawing-room, a few hours after, she was magnificently dressed (for dinner) in the last fashion, and richest materials of the Mexican metropolis. Her chaussure was unexceptionable—her white gloves were the best fit of Jouvin—and her pocket handkerchief, richly embroidered, was redolent of Pachouli. You may well suppose, that H—, when

she entered in her plain travelling attire, served but as a foil to the still young and good-looking fashionable of Mexico. But although Mrs. H— was stylishly dressed, she certainly was not, in the odious sense of the word, "a fine lady." We found her conversation about Mexico, both amusing and interesting; and she illuminated H— on a variety of matters, connected with her approaching visit to the capital.

A norther—not a very strong one, had set in, just before the arrival of Mr. and Mrs. H—, and had almost suffocated them with dust. They had come to Jalapa by the *diligence*, and wonderful to say, without having been robbed. From Jalapa they came in a "*litera*."

In the evening, I went to see how the norther was behaving itself on the beach; and I found it dashing the surf over the Muelle in fine style. The pier was wholly abandoned, and all business had been suspended. The sea rolled with tolerable force; but still, as the whole thing did not come up to the Alacranes, it failed to impress me strongly. A great norther, however, at the Mole, I could easily conceive, would be an imposing sight.

Tuesday, the 13th, was enlivened by the commandant dining with us, Mr. H— coming in before coffee. Presently we all set off for the Alameda, and both the walk and the houses leading to it, I must say, presented a most desolate appearance; the entire road looking a picture of misery and wretchedness. Whole ranges of crumbling walls shewed where houses had once been; and forsaken sites confessed, how valueless they now were.

Early on Wednesday morning the *conducta* from Mexico arrived. It consisted of the train of carts or wagons which, escorted by a military force, convey from Mexico to Vera Cruz periodical remittances of specie and bullion. The punctual sailings of the packets bring down the *conductas* with considerable regularity. On this occasion, it was one of the largest almost ever known, conveying in 60 wagons a value in specie or in bars of a million and a quarter of dollars. The *conducta* and mounted *muleteers*, defiling into the large open space behind the custom-house, made a striking appearance. The carts were unloaded, when bags of dollars, neatly matted up, and bars, also in matting, were laid in separate heaps round the inside of an immense

warehouse, according to certain marks, so that the respective owners were able to remove it quickly, and without the slightest confusion.

All was bustle, both this day and the next, receiving the bags of dollars and bars of silver into the warehouses, and shipping dollars only (bars being prohibited) for England by the packet. Carts were going the two entire days from the warehouses of Messrs. Manning, Mackintosh and Co. with treasure and, what was equally valuable, cochineal, of which they shipped five or six hundred bales, of 200 pounds weight each.

About the same time that the *conducta* arrived, the packet came in from Tampico, and writing became the order of the day. I forgot to mention that on our landing at Vera Cruz we received all our letters from England, transmitted by the January packet. What a treat to read them in Vera Cruz, when we expected they had all gone on to Mexico! We had also letters of recent date from Valparaiso and Lima, viâ Chagres, and Havana; to answer all, on our very short notice, was a laborious task.

Mr. D—, the agent of the Messrs. Rothschild, in Mexico, a clever and very amusing Englishman,

arrived from the city on his way to the packet to New Orleans, there to meet a scion of the great Hebrew house. Mr. D— dined with us, and kept us merry in carrying our minds, as he did our conversation, back to London, and all its familiar scenes and topics.

Thursday, the 16th, the packet sailed for Southampton, and we took leave of the homeward-bound passengers. Our friend Mr. W— had some misgivings as to whether he would now so far like the customs and habits of the people of England, after so long an absence, as to induce him to remain at home. An untravelled person would not readily believe, how difficult it sometimes is to break through associations formed in a new country, after being somewhat weaned of those in one's native land, which then gradually comes to be regarded, in some sort, as a foreign country. We sent off a large correspondence, public and private. In the evening, when all was still, save the rippling of the now placid waves, we took a long promenade on the pier. Nothing can be more enjoyable than this beautiful climate, with its balmy air, its unclouded sky; and yet,

had any one, before I left England, affirmed to me, what I now, with truth, state of the climate of Vera Cruz, during any part whatever of the season, I should have lent an incredulous ear to the tale.

LETTER XIX.

VERA CRUZ CONCLUDED.

Jalapa, 20th and 21st of February, 1849.

On the day following the packet's sailing, we made the acquaintance of Mr. L—, partner, in the house of M'C—, G—, and Co., and a principal personage in the port. He had been unwell since the day of our arrival; but he dined with us on the 16th, and afterwards, with the addition of Mr. H—, we all proceeded to occupy Mr. J—'s box at the theatre. The *comedia* was in the usual style, tiresome enough; but we had some Spanish *boleros* which somewhat enlivened the entertainment.

Saturday, the 17th, was a busy day with us: our farewell-visits to pay; a dinner-party at four, and a grand dress-ball to attend at night!

The first were easily accomplished, being only to Monsieur and Madame D—, with Monsieur A— and Mr. and Mrs. U—. We found that our three remaining shipwrecked friends would be the last of the batch to leave Vera Cruz for Mexico, as they did not intend to set off for 10 days: so that when or how the doctor and his amiable wife will reach their still far-distant home, seems as problematical as ever.

Returning from our visits, I went over the whole of Vera Cruz once more. I visited again the churches which are in the general style of almost all the churches in Spanish America, much adorned with gold, silver, tinsel, velvet, and all sorts of finery; many inferior paintings and few good ones. The market place is commodious and, as in Campeachy, quite animated when thronged with market women in the morning. There is a good supply of every thing for the table, and particularly of excellent fish which abroad, somehow, is always a treat. I went once more to the mole. A second and stronger norther had set in the day before, and was still raging. The breakers made a clean sweep across the mole, and the waves hurried to the shore in frantic impatience to overtake each other.

The mole itself was as deserted as if it had belonged to a city depopulated by the plague.

From Mr. J—'s *mirador*, the highest in Vera Cruz, I got, on two or three occasions, fine views of the town and circumjacent country. I took H— up one day, when the norther was blowing, and there she felt it in all its glory. We saw the surrounding *baxos* or rocky reefs including those of the Isla de Sacrificios. Here also we had a plain view of all the damage which had been done by the American bombardment, two years before. Scarcely a roof, including the one on which we stood, seemed to have escaped, and some had been sadly battered. But all were now substantially repaired, to my no small wonder; and it made me think more highly of Vera Cruz than ever. At Mr. A—'s house one ball had penetrated a wall, and carried away the face of a Saint Cecilia which adorned, and which still, though thus mutilated, occupies its place in the drawing-room.

Almost all travellers pass so hurriedly through Vera Cruz, that none of them who have published (at least, of those whose works I have looked into), say much more, than that it is a miserable place. Vera Cruz and black vomit are with them

exchangeable terms; so that our writers on Mexico just give the poor port a kick, and then leave it. Only *one* thing they *all* mention—the *Sopilote*; but even this not correctly. The *sopilote* (so called in Mexico only) is, as you know, the principal scavenger of Vera Cruz, as it also is in Lima (Peru). It is the Spanish *gallinaza*, the carrion vulture (*Falco Braziliensis*). The carnivorous habits of the bird keep the streets clean, and it may not be harmed, under pain of correctional dealings. To see them roost in the evening—in long, close lines, on the tops of houses; black, grave, orderly, silent—is really very curious.

You are to understand, that Vera Cruz is, just now, a free and independent, although a federal State of Mexico. The Vera Cruzanos have their own institutions, legislative and executive; but, happily, they have scarce any other military force than their National Guard, made up entirely of citizens. With the different provincial costumes, now so well known, I need not occupy your attention.

Mr. J— recommended, and it was accordingly determined, that we should go in a *litera*, as far as Jalapa, thence to proceed onwards in the *diligence*,

although, to prevent disappointment, as to seats, we had to secure them from Vera Cruz, paying, for two, a hundred dollars or £20, instead of £14, charged from Jalapa. Mr. J—, however, with his usual attention, contrived to *sell* our seats to Jalapa; so that, after all, I only paid seventy dollars, and had our seats secured. The *literas* are kept on hire at Jalapa, whence, when you wish to travel, you must order them: so ours was pre-engaged for Sunday evening.

This arranged, we went to Mr. L—'s to dinner, on Saturday; and such a mercantile residence as his, for form and size, I do not think you ever saw in England; and indeed I scarcely think there is the same *kind* of house in Europe. It contains, under one roof, counting-houses, warehouses, vaults, wine cellars, stables, coach-houses, kitchens, servants' offices and rooms, drawing-rooms (three or four), anti-chambers, dining-rooms, breakfast-room, bed-rooms, corridors, balconies, all, including the open courts, on a gigantic scale, and, of course, occupying, as a whole, an immense area. The corridor, on the first floor, cannot be less than one hundred and fifty to two hundred feet in length; the drawing-rooms are of magnificent

proportions; and the other rooms are in handsome keeping.

Mr. L—, having only just got into this commercial palace, is fitting it up with every convenience, comfort, and elegance. Of the larger reception rooms, only the dining-room was finished; and we sat down at four to a *recherché* dinner. The *cuisine*, I assure you, is, in Vera Cruz, excellent; while the well-cooled wines are of the best. So, when we rose at seven from dessert, I could not help saying to myself: "Greatly, O Vera Cruz, art thou belied."

At eight, Mademoiselle began to make her *toilette* for the ball. It was to be a magnificent affair, given in the *Lonja* or Exchange, by the polite and courtly subscribers. We were much amused with H—'s *femme de chambre*, an excellent specimen of the Vera Cruzana domestic, who expressed the utmost solicitude that the *niña* should, on this occasion, put on every ornament and jewel she possessed. "*Es preciso, pues, que la Niña luzca en el bayle*," she constantly repeated; "Well, the young lady must shine at the ball," no doubt, for the honour of the house; and so we were pleased that, although some of the trinkets

were kept back, Mañuela was, in the end, delighted with the ball-dress of the *niña.*

The room was a capital one, and everything remarkably well got up. The ladies displayed the best taste in their attire—no gaudiness—but, on the contrary, great simplicity running through the whole. There were a few—truth obliges me to say, only a few—very pretty girls; but every one cannot be the *belle* of the room, and even in England one does not always see any great number of first-rate beauties assembled.

The whole went off extremely well; but H— having danced herself into a headache, by half-past two, we then retired, the ball breaking up at five. There was no supper; but the ladies were amply supplied with refreshments, and, at a bar, gentlemen got what they liked, by paying for it. Card tables were laid out in different rooms, and I fancy a good deal of what *we* should call high play was going on. At one of those tables sat a notability, whom I have omitted to mention—Don Rafael Beraza — the courier employed by the British Legation, and *élite* of the mercantile houses. He is constantly going between Mexico and Vera Cruz with the Packet correspondence. He accom-

plishes the journey in thirty-six or thirty-eight hours, while the regular post occupies four days. Don Rafael is a Spaniard by birth, speaks English well, cannot be under sixty-five years of age, is as punctual and rapid in his journeys now as he was five and twenty years ago, has a nice young wife living in Vera Cruz, and is so general a favourite, and so completely the gentleman, that there is not a foreign house (including our Legation) where Don Rafael has not a knife and fork at his service, along with a hearty welcome. I sat next to him one day at dinner at Mr. J—'s table; and he gave me proof that he deserved the good reputation which he enjoyed. The very robbers on the road seem now to know and respect him; they rarely trouble him, although, he says, he always travels with a watch of the moderate value of *eight dollars*, in case of accidents. Don Rafael is favourably mentioned by Mr. Ward, in his book, published twenty-two years ago.

On Sunday, the 18th, we prepared, with some reluctance, to quit. We intended originally to remain in Vera Cruz but four and twenty hours; yet we stopped there nine days. The climate was beautiful; our quarters (delightful in

themselves) gained not a little by a contrast with our late roughing in the world; the scenes around us were new, and above all, Mr. J—, our host, aided by his friends, brought forward so many pleasant things to do and to see, that we were much more willing at last to stay than to start; for, indeed, we were leaving pleasant friends behind.

Having said so much in favour of Vera Cruz, although, as I can assure you, with no exaggeration, I must, as a faithful historian, advert to two of its drawbacks:—of one I have only known by report, the other, I have assuredly felt. I allude to the *vomito negro* (black vomit), and the little black(guard) mosquitoes.

The *vomito negro* is the fatal disorder, the yellow fever, in fact, which, they say, attacks all comers at a certain time of the year; but, as we passed through in the healthy season, we saw nothing of the *vomito*. I was told generally, and Mr. J— fully confirmed what I heard, that the course and nature of the disease being well understood, it never, *with common care*, now proves fatal. *Without care*, or when arising from excesses which no rational man commits, no doubt the *vomito* is as dangerous and fatal

as ever. For myself, I should not feel nervous about it, even in the sickly season.

The mosquitos, for a considerable time after arrival, tease or torment you incessantly. Although we had our mosquito bed-curtains, they did not always defend us from the buzzing plagues through the night; and, indeed, to keep them at bay is a science to be learned. I myself had, long before, acquired it tolerably; and in Campeachy and Vera Cruz, I was of great service to H—, by burning the mosquitos out before she went to bed. You must take your light, and get it within the mosquito net, keeping it all closed. As mosquitos settle upon it, draw the candle down close to the the net towards the mosquito, and it will invariably jump into the flame. But, with all my skill (it does not avail through the day), the plaguy insects contrived to cover us with undeniable proofs of the pungency of their venomous bite.

Not to leave Vera Cruz with disagreeable impressions, which would be at variance with my own, but which can scarcely fail to be produced by *vomito negro* and mosquitoes, I will say a word of another sort of living thing which I fell in with, during our short residence at the port.

One night, towards ten o'clock, Mr. Wiseman, having invited me to go with him, and have *an English supper*, we walked arm in arm through two or three streets, till we entered a nice, clean, and rather genteel coffee-room. Here Mr. W. called for oysters and Scotch ale! The oysters were indubitable Brobdignagians, for each, I think, was equal to half a dozen of our natives. But no native could you find of a more delicate flavour, or better fed and plumper, or whiter, than these mangrove oysters, for that was the kind we ate. A very feast for an alderman! and I really grudged, while eating these enormous delicacies, the absence of the more refined members of our London Corporation. What a rush! could these mangroves be transferred to Pimm's oyster-room, in the Poultry.

The oysters take the name of mangrove, from the marine shrub, to the roots of which they attach themselves under water. The shell is deep and oblong. The ale, the bread and butter, and the service were as at Pimm's aforesaid. In short, it was altogether a London supper, saving and excepting always the size of the monsters of the deep which we swallowed.

LETTER XX.

THE "LITERA" JOURNEY.

Jalapa, February, 1851.

THIS world is a world of mutabilities, of choppings and changes, of dissolving and reconstructing views, of migration and transmigration of the body *from* place *to* place; through the terraqueous, across the aqueous; still the order to man, as it was to the wandering Jew, is—MARCH!

Under these peripatetic (my words are getting rather *altísonant*) laws of this world, the day arrived when we must march from Vera Cruz. We packed up early on Sunday morning, Agapito assisting us, as usual, but, on this occasion with a rueful visage, as he did not at all relish the idea of separation.

We spent a quiet day at home, enlivened, however, by visits from our four *tertulianos*, and

the commandant. At four P. M. the *litera* was at the door. The shape is that of a large berth on board ship. From the four corners rise four posts forming an oblong wooden frame, while two more in the centre, on either side, make doors for entrance and egress. Over the whole frame is thrown an awning with curtains, together with some network to hold articles of use. Then shafts being attached, as in a sedan chair, two mules are harnessed, "fore and aft," one drawing, the other pushing. The litera is lifted into the harness, and when comfortably settled in your place, away the mules trot.

Martinez, Mr. J—'s major-domo, and the very prince of good servants, one of those who, after a time, render themselves as indispensable to your comfort as the clothes you wear, Martinez, as caterer, put into the nettings of the litera a large roasted fowl, tongue, chocolate, bread, oranges, cognac, claret and sherry. Then Mr. L— presented H— with a box of Huntly and Palmer's Reading biscuits, and Mr. H— insisted on my taking a box of his splendid Havana regalias (idleness and bad example had made me once more a smoker), so you may imagine we were altogether

independent of supplies on the road, considering we had but thirty-six hours of it. A sumpter-mule carried the light luggage actually required, the custom being to send the heavy packages and valuables by *Arrieros* who go in troops for mutual safety against highway robbers.

At Mr. J—'s door we took leave of Agapito (who remained at Vera Cruz waiting an opportunity for Tampico), of Mr. H—, and Mr. M—. Poor Agapito! with fine sensibilities and strong affections, he was always pretending to care for nothing, and on this occasion he was busy repressing a tear, as he hastily and nervously shook hands with us. In fact, I have a suspicion that he would as soon have accompanied us as have remained to proceed to Zacatecas to join his family, from which he had been separated at an early age.

A mattress, four pillows, sheets and coverlet having been placed in the Litera, H— got in to recline one way, and I to recline another, heads and tails: up our palanquin was hoisted into the mule's harness; and as we swung laterally and jogged along, a *literero* guided the front mule, while the *capataz*, or conductor, cracked his whip

as he drove his relay mules before him. Finally, in Mexican costume, and on mettlesome Mexican horses, with gay Mexican saddles and bridles, Messrs. J— and L— rode beside us, as a guard of honour, out of the town.

Our road lay along, and close by the beach, for two or three miles, and then, as daylight drew towards a close, our two friends were preparing to return, when suddenly we found our capataz in a squabble with some rough-looking fellows who had darted out of a road-side public house, and who, after many menaces, seized hold of his reins. Our escort dashed in among them, and learned that, this being the first day of Carnival, the custom of that place was to levy a sort of *montem* on passengers, as contributions towards the evening amusements and *ball*. Our capataz was rusty, the rustics were resolute, but Mr. L— gave them a dollar, and all was right. So we shook hands, our kind friends returning to Vera Cruz, and we pushing on for our resting-place, "*el Puente Nacional*," once "*el Puente del Rey*."

Travelling in the dark, we saw nothing distinctly of the country. We had trees on each side; but the scenery, I learned, was not interesting. We

felt by the jolting, however, that the road was terrible for the poor mules: neither was it very easy for us; and, albeit desirous of slumber, what with the bumping, what with the confined space allowed our bodies, and, finally, what with the constant supplications of our *capataz* to keep, now further to this, now further to that side, in order to trim the *litera*, sleep grew shy, and would not be wooed.

About a couple of hours after midnight, we passed three or four men sitting round a fire in the middle of the road; and at the hamlet of Puente our *literero* informed us, that they belonged to the *diligencia* going to Vera Cruz, which he saw, as we passed, was overturned; although, with that *calma** characteristic of the lower classes of the Spanish Americans, he never thought of either stopping when he came to the upset vehicle, nor even of letting us know what had happened.

At four A.M. we reached the *venta*, or "inn," and the little hamlet just mentioned. Here, we found, we must remain till four in the afternoon, to avoid the mid-day heat. So H— and I lay

* *Calma* here means "apathy, nonchalance;" *un calmoso*, an apathetic fellow.

down (as usual, in our clothes) each on a stretcher which we found in the *venta*. We slept pretty soundly till nine. At ten we had a good breakfast *á la Mexicana*, consisting of many dishes; but, best of all, our cold roast fowl, with part of a bottle of claret, and *café au lait*, to wind up the solid repast. Before breakfast, I had strolled to the Puente Nacional; and I was no less surprised than pleased with this noble structure, at once a prominent and useful feature in the picturesque scenery which it adorns. You will find a truthful drawing of this bridge by Mrs. Ward, in her husband's "Mexico," to which I would specially refer you. Mr. Bullock could not ascertain, at the village, the name of the beautiful river, neither could I. *Quien sabe?** said one; "Who knows?" *No sé, señor*, "I don't know," said another. And the most intelligent assured me that it had no particular name, but was just called, "the river of the bridge," which to them appeared as satisfactory as to say, that the structure was called "the bridge of the river." The river, notwithstanding, *has* a name, being properly called, "El

* The *Quien sabe?* of the Spaniard is an untranslateable mode of saying, "I don't know: How should I know?"

Rio de la Antigua;" and it disembogues at the village Antigua, into the Gulf, some six or seven leagues north-east of Vera Cruz.

The Puente del Rey (to give the name when it was constructed) is thrown across the Antigua at a fine mountain-pass; and the heights which rise abruptly from either side of the river, being clothed with ever-verdant trees and underwood, give a striking beauty to the scene. The water, clear as crystal, gurgles over its stony bed, encumbered by scattered masses of broken rocks, which, in dry weather, merely dip into the then shallow stream. The river takes a beautiful sweep round, just as it clears the arches of the bridge. This solid, but symmetrical piece of architecture has a level road-way; crosses the river obliquely; stands, as I remember, on six arches; and, running well on to the land, on the west, or north-west end, makes there a fine curve, which adds to the elegance of its outline.

At a quarter of a mile, or less, below the bridge, General Santa Ana built for himself a fine country house, standing on one of the highest precipitous banks through which the Antigua meanders far beneath. I went, of course, to visit this handsome

villa, at present, alas! in a very dilapidated state. It was chosen by the Americans, during the late war, as their head-quarters in that district; and the destructive traces which the soldiery have left, are much more those of Vandals than of a civilised people. The house and surrounding offices which occupy an area of four or five acres, were shewn by the *major-domo*, now in charge of the seat neglected by its banished owner. The American invaders had pulled down the fine cielings of the handsome suite of rooms running round the corridor. The doors were unhinged, and used as fuel, on the plea of being more "handy" than that of the adjacent woods. The costly furniture was broken or destroyed, and huddled into corners. In the solid walls large excavations were made in a vain search after supposed hidden treasure! And the walls themselves were defaced and mutilated, here or there covered with the glorious and never-dying names of the Smiths, the Browns, the Figginses and the Higginses, "smart" men who had taken this noble and military fashion of displaying their hatred of General Santa Ana. I speak, as I have said, of the soldiery—and perhaps some subaltern officers may be included—but not of those

who held any commanding rank. It is too well known, however, how little control these had, in their desultory marches, over the undoubtedly brave, but heterogeneous masses and desperate characters who composed the principal portion of the invading army.

General Santa Ana, celebrated for his dictatorial career, lauded as a hero, a patriot, the saviour of his country, the bravest of the brave, at one time; at another, banished for his alleged misdeeds and misrule, his avarice, immorality and public peculations;—is a great territorial lord, a *nong-tong-paw* of the state of Vera Cruz. Wherever you go, you hear of his name, and are made acquainted with his possessions of every kind. Among others, he has a much finer seat than that at the Puente Nacional in the same road; although, passing it during the night, I must leave it without farther notice.

After making a good dinner, principally of our fine roasted fowl, washed down with Martinez's sherry and claret, we set off from the Puente Nacional at 4 P.M. We procured for H— a supply of delicious oranges, a refreshing accompaniment on such a journey, and away we jogged, with the usual swing, for Jalapa. Our security between

Vera Cruz and the Puente Nacional made us quite oblivious of "the robbers."

The road was so bad, and so little interesting, that we cared not when, by half past six, the shades of night began to gather round us. You know, there is scarcely any twilight in tropical regions. Towards eight, it began to drizzle, and so it continued to do, when we were let down on the ground to change mules at the village called Plan del Rio, in compliment to its situation on the Rio del Plan.

When I got out of the litter to stretch my legs, a curious scene presented itself to me. We were in front of a *venta*, or public-house, which consists generally, as it did here, of a thatched building of two or three divisions, with a rude, but wide corridor running along the front. Here almost all the villagers were celebrating not only carnival, but the nuptials of a happy pair who had been united that day. The women were in their holiday dresses, and so were many of the men; but it was a motley group, many covering their poor habiliments with the never-failing *serape* (the *poncho* of the South Americans, the *serape* of the Mexicans); but all those connected with the wedding party

putting forth a variety of attempts at many-coloured, barbaric finery. The whole place was crowded, in and out of the ball-room; for a ball there was. The young men and women were standing up in country-dance arrangement, but their dancing consisted of a droll little monotonous shuffle of the feet, every one now and then turning slowly round as on a pivot, anon quietly changing sides; and all with the unshaken gravity and silence of the aristocratic ball at Campeachy. The effect is laughable. The music consisted of a jingling guitar, vigorously thrummed, but not at all attuned to Apollo's lyre; and it was accompanied by a vocal *improvisatore* who suited his words, with what humour he could command, to the scene exhibited before him, and to the characters around him. The spectators were much pleased: some were drinking, all smoking, and in a corner cards were calling up the darker passions of the older men. During the half hour that I was observing the festivities at Plan del Rio, H— remained in the *litera* resting on the ground, close by.

From this place to Jalapa was a wearisome journey in the dark. The rain fell the whole way,

and the roads were something terrific. I could easily understand how the principal upsettings of the *diligencia* were between Vera Cruz and Jalapa; for in spite of all the anxious care of our *litereros*, our mules came down twice, causing, however, no inconvenience to us. These *muleteers* of Spanish America, in every part, talk to their mules, as if they were human servants, and understood every word addressed to them, in every variety of intonation. I believe the sagacious mules *did* comprehend all the shades of the admonitions, and all the intensity of the opprobrious epithets lavished upon them. Our principal *literero*, or *capataz*, a pleasant fellow called Romero, kept constantly either animating, exhorting, or upbraiding the animals which were doing his work. "*Ah, mulas sin verguenza!*" "O shameless mules!" was his favourite expression, although he sometimes used even more unworthy appellations. The mules jogged on, patiently bearing all. Then Romero would mix up with his addresses to his dumb friends, and a conversation with his companion, who guided the front mule, interlocutory snatches with myself, as he rode alongside of the *litera*. He was highly amused at last by my telling him that I thought

his sturdy mules were not nearly so "shameless" as he would make them believe; and what entertained us in return, was, that, after my appeal, Romero was less prodigal of his vituperations and anathemas.

LETTER XXI.

JALAPA.—JILOTEPEC.—CUATEPEC.

Jalapa, 20, 21*st February,* 1851.

As the grey morning began to dawn upon us, the rain ceased, and at five we found ourselves in Jalapa at the great gate of the "Hotel de la Vera Cruzana" which Mr. J— had recommended to us as the best. The morning was desperately *cold*! and we were kept for some time shivering at the door, before we could gain admittance. At last the heavy bolts were drawn by the sleepy *portero*, and we walked into an immense *patio,* with a fountain in the centre, and small orange trees and shrubs, in large earthen vases, placed at intervals in a low surrounding balustrade. We felt almost frozen; and the great house looked bleak in the yet damp and early morning: but we ordered hot chocolate, got ourselves into bed-rooms, running off the corridor, and went to bed at six, now more

comfortable, but still very cold. At the Puente Nacional, the previous morning, so scorching were the rays of the sun, so oppressively hot the atmosphere, that H— could barely allow herself a hasty look at the surrounding scenery.

We rose, refreshed, at ten, and breakfasted in a *comedor*, or dining-room, about 40 feet in length and 28 to 30 feet in width, with a corresponding loftiness of roof. Such are the principal public rooms generally in Mexico. I had a letter of introduction for Mr. K— here, and was about to proceed to his house, after breakfast, when our host, Don Juan, informed me that he (Mr. K—) had just lost a favourite child, and, moreover, that he had a countryman of our own in his house suffering from a fractured limb, caused by the upsetting of the *diligencia*. I forebore therefore the pleasure I had anticipated in making Mr. K—'s acquaintance; but I must mention his name, in order to record the high respect he enjoys for his urbanity and hospitality to strangers, and for the general kindness of heart and benevolence which distinguish him. He is one of that rare class who do good by stealth, "blushing to find it fame;" and accordingly he is greatly beloved in Jalapa.

I had also a letter for my *banker*, Don Nicolas Pastoressa, a worthy and opulent merchant and shopkeeper, who was all kindness, and supplied all my wants.

Jalapa is a very curious, old-fashioned looking town, and what you rarely or never find in Spanish America, its streets are quite irregular and crooked. It is beautifully situated on undulating and hilly grounds, most of its thoroughfares very steep, many of the houses large and commodious, in the old, heavy, Spanish style, with windows almost flush with the pavement, and defended by iron gratings. "Behind these," says Mr. Ruxton in his very clever 'Adventures in Mexico and the rocky Mountains,' "sit the Jalapeñas, with their beautifully fair complexions and eyes of fire."—In the background of the city and its numerous hills and ravines is seen the great Cofré of Perote, with lesser mountains intervening. It is faithfully drawn by Mrs. Ward, and ornaments the second volume of Mr. W—'s work.

I had, like every one else, heard much of the scenery around Jalapa; and as far as I could perceive, on a first and general glance, its beauties had by no means been exaggerated. I determined,

therefore, to visit two places, to which my atten- had been particularly called by Mr. J—, my time not permitting me to compass more.

The first is *Jilotepéc*, about two or three leagues on the high road to Puebla.

From the commencement of the road, the mountain scenery which lies before you, is diversified and extensive. The vegetation around, is, as ever, of the freshest, and of the most brilliant hues. Diverging from the highway at a right angle, and proceeding along a road, which appeared to me to be at the foot of mountains, rising from the table land, I felt invigorated by the freshness, quite amounting to coldness of the air.

Suddenly—as we journeyed along, we came to the valley of Jilotepéc; and no scenery I ever saw (I have seen much), ever struck me with so much wonder and admiration. There was such an extent of table land, that the idea of any deep valley thereabouts, was entirely banished from the mind—at least it was from mine.

Yet all at once—without any warning—I stood on the edge of a precipice, and looked down with amazement on the peaceful valley of Jilotepéc, lying at a great and almost perpendicular depth below. And

glancing around, my wonder increased as I observed that the valley was encircled by a ring, if I may so speak, of symmetrical mountains, and like the particular cone on which I stood. In the centre of the valley lay Jilotepéc, whence rose the village church, prettily designed, with a handsome spire; while its clear and marble-like (although only whitewashed) walls still glittered in the softened rays of the descending sun. The valley was a gem in itself; and the whole, by reason of the grandeur of the surrounding mountains, presented a noble blending of the sublime and beautiful.

After gazing in silence for some minutes on the scene which lay above me—around me, and below me, we began to wind down to Jilotepéc, and I assure you, it would have appeared to you a somewhat perilous descent. I had, however, been accustomed to yet more formidable ones in the Cordillera of Chili and Peru. Still, all the way, although the road was zig-zig, it was sometimes so steep as to threaten a somersault, if we did not keep ourselves well back on our saddles. But the sure-footed animal on which I was mounted, descended in safety by the paved way (for such it was)—a road cut out through the otherwise

impervious woods, which teemed with a mixture of fine large timber trees, flower-covered shrubs, underwood and wild flowers innumerable; the luxuriance with which they all clustered together, on either side, lending to every turn of the precipitous way, a new and increasing interest.

Jilotepéc is an Indian village; one of a vast group in that mountainous vicinity, all of the same character, composed of a better sort of cottages, and of inferior huts. Through the centre of the village, runs one principal line of road, scarcely to be called a street, and in which was situated the public house, into which I entered, to give my guide some refreshment. It was served by a remarkably handsome young female, apparently married; and as fair as any Englishwoman could desire to be.

I ought to observe, that another remarkable object in this beautiful valley, is the ruin of a church, placed on a small conical hill, close to the village, and to ascend to which, I was extremely sorry time did not permit. In fact, I had lingered so long, viewing the grandeur of nature above me, as I had done before, in contemplating its beauties beneath me, that I was warned by an Indian not

to tarry; for if darkness overtook us in our ascent, I might very easily be falling over a precipice, no unusual event; and having no wish so to end my agreeable trip, I made haste home, and got there (without meeting robbers) somewhere after nightfall.

I was very sorry H— could not accompany me on this trip to Jilotepéc, though I should have felt really nervous, had I seen her descending to the valley, and ascending from it. Cuatepec was an easier affair, and certainly, as I was told, "*muy divertido,*" livelier. So, next morning, providing a *litera* for H— (who did not like to venture on the peaked Mexican saddle, used indifferently here by men and women), and a horse for myself, off we went, on a lovely morning, for Cuatepec.

We passed through a succession of varied scenery, as fine as any on which the eye could dwell. The distance of the village or town is about three leagues from Jalapa, or eight miles, not more; but in some panoramic views which we obtained, these eight miles presented to us every element of the finest scenery. Sombre dells and gurgling rivulets, deep ravines and mountain streams; hills, undulating grounds, plains;

cultivated fields; fruit trees, wild flowers; dense forests and coppice; cottages, sugar plantations; mountains in the distance, seen under a sky, the blue of which was only interrupted here and there by a fleecy cloud, lying in mid-air or hanging about the higher mountains. The foliage and the verdure were freshened by the early dews, and glistened in the morning sun. I wish I could lead you to Cuatepec—truly a paradise realised—nature exhibiting her beauties with the skill of an artist; showing in the foreground the nicer shades of her pencil, and happy grouping of her more minute materials, supporting these by a massive back ground, best calculated to give completeness to the picture.

You enter Cuatepec by a long approach, lined by trees and cottages. Fruit and flowers (in particular the *Floripondus*) depend in graceful clusters from the trees; which are, moreover, so frondiferous, that each whitewashed cottage is only distinct when you come up to it, while those in the line before you merely peep forth from the intervening trees. From this avenue you enter on the principal street of the town itself, wide, and with many very good houses.

"*Quiere su merced parar en una posada con cocina?*" said Romero; for we had the same Romero and his brother, and some of the same "shameless" mules which had brought us from Vera Cruz,—"Will you stop at an inn *with a kitchen?*"

"With a kitchen!" I asked, "What do you mean?"

"Oh!" replied Romero; "you know there are *posadas* where they cook for you, and *posadas* where they do not."

"By all means, then," I said, "let us go to the best *kitchen-posada*,—and see, my friend, that a good dinner be cooked for you, while we walk out to view the town."

Dicho y hecho—no sooner said than done—our *litereros* stopped at a clean, comfortable-looking *posada*; they let H— down in the middle of the wide street, and forth she stepped, with a lace shawl over her head, like some Indian princess. Away then we strolled over Cuatepec, while Romero superintended the preparation for more substantial amusement than scenery or sunshine, for him and his two companions. One of them was a volunteer, a cousin of Romero, in his holiday

dress and accoutrements—a picture of the Mexican costume, now so well known. Our cousin was rigged out in his gayest, for though a brother *literero*, he was, on the present occasion, out on his own account—that is, for his own pleasure.

In the centre of the fine, broad, countrified street, stands a handsome church; and another, as a terminus of the same line. The latter, resembling some of our own village churches, was situated on a green knoll, where browsed the pastor's horse, along with a couple of ewes; and while we yet stood looking around us, out dashed a levy of chubby children, from the parish school, into the green, where we left them gambolling in the sunshine.

As we now walked to the other extremity of the long street, on passing one of the houses of the better class, I looked into the Patio, and saw some fine roses. We walked in. There we saw a "Señora Madre" with two good-looking young ladies, and a youth, apparently her family. I told her I had taken the liberty to step in to look at her flowers, and to beg a rose for the "Inglesita" who accompanied me. "Con muchisimo gusto," said madame; and in a moment, with pruning knife in hand, the young gentleman was on his

feet. A profusion of compliments were interchanged; and H— left with a choice bouquet in her hand.

We returned, after an hour's pleasant walk, to our inn; and a savoury smell attracted me to an indubitable "kitchen." A variety of messes were in process of cooking; and great seemed to be the preparations making for the family and the guests, of whom Romero was the chief, and there he was indeed playing Sir Oracle. The innkeeper sat in the back corridor with his legs crossed, his serape on his shoulder, a cigar in his mouth, and cards in his hands. He was deeply engaged in play with two friends. He scarcely deigned to notice me. The principal manager of the concern was evidently his wife, who on this occasion despatched the culinary part of her work, with the assistance of two female cooks (probably *pro tempore*); while her daughter, a rather pretty girl of sixteen, with a little brother in her arms, was kept running in and out to buy a medio's worth of this, and a real's worth of that; always, as she went out, putting the child down on the ground, and taking up her *rebozo*, the universal covering, as you know, throughout the ex-colonies of Spain, for female head and

shoulders. At last, a famous dinner was served up for Romero, his brother, and "our cousin"; to which they all did ample justice. I had my lemonade, qualified with a little cognac; and a lady living opposite, having seen H—, sent over to her by a little handmaid, and "con muchas expresiones á la niña," some fine oranges, and sweet lemons—a juicy but tasteless fruit, in much request, however, within the tropics, on account of its cooling qualities.

On leaving the beautiful Cuatepec, we deviated, by Romero's recommendation, from the high road, making a detour to the Hacienda of Don—I forget his name—in which he told us we should see a noted "*trapiche*," or sugar mill, with the process of sugar boiling, and of distillation going forward.

H— and I had now changed places. She had languished under the lazy, lolling movement of the "*litera*," going out; so on our return, I crept into the "*litera*," and she mounted my sprightly little charger; when being placed under the care and management of our gay "cousin" who rode by her side, we trotted off for the Hacienda.

The road was at first terrifically bad; but presently we got into a sort of parish road, running

through "Cañaverales," or sugar-cane plantations. The Hacienda stood on an eminence, to which we ascended by a causeway, and we found the buildings so extensive, that I should think they did not cover less than half-a-dozen acres of ground. The Hacienda was extremely rough in all its appointments; but in Mexico, where money is not to be had under eighteen per cent. per annum, everything *to pay*, must be got up at the cheapest rate, and under a system of stringent economy; for though more perfect machinery, better constructed buildings, attention to repairs, and a higher class of labour employed, would no doubt produce larger results, it is very questionable whether the additional gain could be brought to pay for the increase of capital employed.

The *trapiche* or mill for crushing the cane revolved around very large, solid brass cylinders; the vats for receiving the juice were ranged along a gallery of from 150 to 200 feet in length, the contents being constantly ladled out from one vat to another. The distillery had a slovenly look, but was working well, and produced a good flavoured spirit which I tasted. The stabling, granaries, and other appurtenances bore all the

same uncouth, untidy, and, here and there, dilapidated appearance; neatness, comfort, exact order, cleanness, as being all considered unnecessary towards beneficial results, were not only disregarded, but really sedulously shut out, apparently on the economical system already referred to.

Our inspection over, we proceeded on our way, and ere long fell into the main road. Here I perceived the real motive of honest Romero's recommendation to go round by the "Cañaverales;" he was carrying off, as heavy a bundle as he could lay on his mule's shoulder, of the canes which he had cut in passing through the field. "*Ola! Romero!*" I cried, "*qué es eso? robo?*" (what is that? a robbery?)—"*Qué robo, valgame Dios!*" answered he; "*si eso no quiere decir nada.*"—Robbery! it was nothing. I then thanked him for his kind and disinterested advice to visit the hacienda, particularly as he had so much trouble in getting through the Cañaveral. Romero laughed. "The fact is," said he, "I have two little ones at home, and whenever I go to Cuatepec, or on other excursions towards a Cañaveral, the mother and they always look for a *cañita* (a *little* cane), and so you see, *patron*, I never like to disappoint them."

Again on the high road, H— galloped off, and, with "our cousin," went far ahead of the "shameless" mules who could scarcely manage a trot. While we were thus separated, a tremendous shower of rain began to fall. The cousin, seeing its approach, galloped still faster, till he screened H— from the storm under the porch of a road-side public-house; and there, as I jogged up in the swinging *litera*, I found her laughing at our forlorn appearance, all soaked as we were in the rain.

H— was, however, forced to take her place once more from this point in the *litera*. The rain continued to fall copiously, as we trotted off in our old way—heads and heels—and we were not long in reaching Jalapa, although the road is equally hilly and beautiful. As we drew near, the rain ceased. Every thing looked thankful for what had fallen: the flowers sent forth more than their usual fragrance; the leaves of the trees assumed a still fresher green; the birds, shaking their feathers, chirped forth their joy; and near Jalapa, from the low point, happily chosen by Mrs. Ward, we got a beautiful view of the ancient city and its gardens hanging on their declivities, with the hills and higher mountains, and of the great Cofré of Perote,

which stood out, in massive relief, as the culminating point of the scene.

A POSTSCRIPT TO LETTER XXI.

On reading over what I have said of Jalapa and its scenery, I have thought you might fancy, I was "romancing" a little; and I shall therefore in self-defence give here some extracts from other travellers. You will find that among us all, I alone have the temerity even to attempt a task which, it is held, the pen is incapable of performing.

"Of the country about Jalapa," says Mr. Ward, in 1827, "it is impossible that any words should convey an adequate idea. It stands in the centre of some of the finest mountain scenery which any country can boast of."

Mr. Bullock, who preceded Mr. Ward by some five years, undertakes a long account of the city of Jalapa; but he only takes a passing notice of the surrounding scenery. As he approached Jalapa, "the country greatly improved in appearance, the air was perceptibly better, our spirits began to revive, and soon, to our very great satisfaction, we discovered woods of oak. The face of

vegetation was now also entirely changed, and we were reminded of the finest parts of Europe. We passed along a fine paved road, bordered by the most luxuriant trees and shrubs, of every form and hue, the whole of which were new to us. It might be compared to a ride through an extensive park in Europe, having its roads bounded by a succession of the finest exotic trees and plants to be found in our hot-houses and conservatories. On reaching the summit of a hill, we discovered the beautiful city of Jalapa before us. Its white churches and buildings have a very pretty appearance, standing at a height of 4,264 feet above the level of the sea; commanding an extensive view, and having a grand back ground, formed by Perote, Orizava, and other volcanic mountains."

"There are in Jalapa," says one of the liveliest of all our Mexican travellers—Madame C— de la B—, "some old churches, a very old convent of Franciscan monks, and a well supplied market-place. Everywhere there are flowers; roses creeping over the old walls; Indian girls making green garlands for the virgin and saints, flowers in the shops, flowers in the windows; but, above all,

everywhere one of the most splendid mountain views in the world."

I *must* go on. "The Cofré de Perote, with its dark pine forests and gigantic *chest* (a rock of porphyry which takes that form), and the still loftier snow-white peak of Orizava, tower above all the others, seeming like the colossal guardians of the land. The intervening mountains, the dark cliffs and fertile plains, the thick woods of lofty trees, clothing the hills and the valleys; a glimpse of the distant ocean; the surrounding lanes, shaded by fruit trees; aloes, bananas, chirimoyas, mingled with the green liquidambar, the flowering myrtle, and hundreds of plants and shrubs, and flowers of every kind, and of delicious fragrance; all combine to form one of the most varied and beautiful scenes that the eye can behold.

"Then Jalapa itself, so old and gray, and rose be-covered, with a sound of music issuing from every door and window, and its soft and agreeable temperature, presents, even in a few hours, a series of agreeable impressions not easily effaced."

[Forgive me, dear Madame C— de la B—, for thus culling your sweets; but how pleased must my readers be once more to sip them.]

Hear what Charles Joseph Latrobe, in his "Rambles in Mexico," has to say, on his arrival at Jalapa:—

"The change from the sterility of the table land above [he was coming *from* the city of Mexico] to the luxuriant and teeming vegetation of this lovely region, was not more striking than the contrast between the characteristic features of the great level plains with their barren volcanic cones, to the varied and beautiful wooded hills, vales, and mountains, which characterise this most lovely region of New Spain . . . .

"A lovelier sight, and more beautiful scenery, you need not seek in the torrid zone! Below you a steep descent leads rapidly down the verdant and fresh slopes, towards the shore of the gulf, which is just visible from the highest part of the town, at the distance of twenty leagues and upwards. Above you, ridge rises above ridge, crowned by the Cofré de Perote; and, yet further to the southward, by the magnificent, snow-covered summit of Orizava, in comparison to whose sublime and majestic stature, the elevated mountains which cluster round its feet appear but as pigmies. To the right and left, extending along the mountains'

sides, at the height of between four and five thousand feet above the sea, lies a delicious and and salubrious region, covered with magnificent forests, and diversified by some of the most beautiful towns in New Spain: a country smiling with an eternal spring, under the kindly influence of the heavy mists and dews, which, rising thus midway up the steep Cordillera from the bosom of the gulf, pause here in mid-air, and promote that rich verdure which is equally grateful to the inhabitants of the arid and sterile table land, or of the fervid sands of the sea board. . . .

"I often linger in fancy among its (Jalapa's) low, red-tiled, broad-eaved habitations, or exuberant gardens, and muse upon the marvellous beauty of its convent-crowned hill, and the freshness of its gushing waters, lakes, and shady woods . . . In architecture the town affords a delightful example of the old Spanish style, and many of the country seats in the vicinity are delightful retreats. The population amounts to thirteen thousand."

Brantz Mayer, Secretary of the United States Legation, in 1841-2, has written an excellent account of his travels, with capital illustrations on wood. The work, which well deserves perusal, is

entitled "Mexico, as It Was and as It Is," published by Wiley and Putnam, New York. Unfortunately, Mr. Mayer passed through Jalapa when under one of its heavy mists; but he does justice, notwithstanding, to the city, — "high, healthy, and built on almost precipitous streets, winding, with curious crookedness, up the steep hill sides. This perching and bird-like architecture makes a city picturesque, although its highways may be toilsome to those who are not always in search of the romantic." Mr. Mayer was told (and such is the fact) that many of the best houses were furnished and decorated in a tasteful style; and he adds: "the hotel in which we lodged was an evidence of this; its walls and ceilings were painted in a style of splendour rarely seen out of Paris.

"When the Neapolitans speak to you of their beautiful city" (Mr. Brantz Mayer still *loquitur*), "they call it, 'a piece of heaven fallen to earth!' and tell you, 'to see Naples and *die!*' It is only because so few travellers extend their journey to Jalapa, and describe its scenery, that it has not received something of the same extravagant eulogium. . . . . Yet I saw enough," through the

mist, "to justify all the praises even of extravagant admirers. Its society is said to be excellent, and its women are the theme of the poets throughout the republic.* As I descended from the top of San Francisco, and wended my way to the hotel, I met numbers of the fair *doncellas*, lounging homeward from early mass. The stately step, the liquid eye, the pale yet brilliant cheek, and an indescribable look of tenderness, complete a picture of beauty rarely matched in northern climes, and elsewhere unequalled in Mexico."

Who has not read the "Adventures in Mexico and the Rocky Mountains," of the highly-gifted Ruxton—prematurely called, alas! from scenes to which his pen lent such striking and undeniable charms? Who does not know his "Life in the Far West"? And who would not wish that he had been spared, for the sake of the world, which he had already delighted, and was so well calculated, by his active habits, his energetic character, his graphic powers, his literary attainments, his happy vein of humour, and his intellectual strength,

* "*Las Jalapeñas son muy Halagüeñcs,*" says the Mexican adage, "the women of Jalapa are very bewitching." *Witches* they would be called in Lancashire, as the women of that county are designated.

to continue to delight and to instruct? Yet long, ere the fruit was ripe, it was blown from the tree. While travelling in the United States, he was carried off by dysentery, at St. Louis, on the Mississipi, on the 29th of September, 1849, at the early age of thirty-eight.

In respect to his lively and entertaining work on Mexico, I have here, of course, only to do cursorily with his account of Jalapa. After giving some particulars of the alternate either heavy or drizzling rain—the *Chipi-chipi*,* as it is termed, and splendid sunshine, Lieutenant Ruxton proceeds:—

"On a bright sunny day, the scenery round Jalapa is not to be surpassed: mountains bound the horizon, except on one side, where a distant view of the sea adds to the beauty of the scene. Orizava, with its snow-capped peak, appears so close, that one imagines it is within reach; and rich and evergreen forests clothe the surrounding hills. In the foreground are beautiful gardens, with fruits of every clime—the banana and fig, the orange, cherry, and apple."

* The sun is for days obscured, and the Jalapeño, muffled in his *serape*, smokes his *cigarro* and mutters, "*Ave Maria purisima, que venga el sol!*" "Oh, for a peep at the sun, Holy Virgin!" literally, "Holy Mary, let the sun come out!"

Mr. Ruxton put up at the same hotel as we did, (the Vera Cruzana), and let him describe it, instead of myself:—

"In the Fonda Vera Cruzana, where I put up, and advise all travellers to do the same, were two daughters of mine host: one was as fair as Jenny Lind, and the other dark as Jephtha's daughter, and both very pretty. Although the proverb says, '*Ventera hermosa, mal para la bolsa*' 'a pretty hostess gives no change,' here it is an exception; and my good friend Don Juan will take care of man and beast, and charge reasonably." *

Such is the concurrent testimony to the charms of Jalapa, its scenery, and its people. With these extracts, I think my picture is pretty well complete; and I have made some of my own sketches give way to what has appeared to me to be so well said, giving authenticity to my statements, by others.

* Of Captain Lyon's "Journal," I shall speak in another place.

LETTER XXII.*

ROBBERS! ROBBERS!! ROBBERS!!!

> The cry is still they come! Let 'em come!
> Our castle's strength will laugh a siege to scorn.
>
> SHAKESPEARE.

THE universal theme of conversation between Vera Cruz and the city of Mexico is that of "The Robbers!" We began, in fact, to hear of them in London, for there, by our Mexican friends, we were told that, "*of course*," we must prepare to be robbed on the road to Mexico. Nobody escaped; we must take no valuables with us; only forty or fifty dollars, as a peace-offering to inevitable robbers. So, to be tempest-tost first; shipwrecked next; driven incontinently on desert islands; and finally, to be assaulted, and forthwith, *boca abaxo*, licking the dust, to be stopped and plundered; seemed to be the unmistakeable price which we

* Written after our arrival at Mexico.

were to pay for our transfer from the Modern Babylon to the much celebrated seat of the ancient Aztecs.

I have tarried so long over the first part of our journey from Vera Cruz to Mexico, that I must now endeavour to be brief with the remainder. At Vera Cruz we had learned that the banditti never attacked *literas*, as by them they could never get plunder to speak of; it was from Jalapa, where we were to join the *diligencia*, that we were to look out for the civil gentlemen of the road. I was not to take any arms; I was to offer no resistance; we were to embrace mother earth when ordered to do so; to lose good-naturedly whatever we had with us; and to fear nothing more.

On the evening of our return from Cuatepec (Wednesday 21st), I went from the Vera Cruzana to the Hotel de Diligencias, and there met Monsieur Thullier, a gentlemanlike and pleasant Frenchman, whose acquaintance I had made at Vera Cruz, the place of his business as a merchant. He and his friend M. Pommier had come up by the *diligencia* just arrived; and they were to be our *compagnons de voyage* as far as Puebla. He told us that he had left Mr. J— and our other

friends in much alarm about our safety, the driver of the upset *diligencia* (which we had met on our way) having reported that his accident had arisen from his horses having taken fright at a quantity of linen and clothes strewed on the road, and supposed to be from a *litera* from Vera Cruz, which had been robbed! It was a mere invention of the driver, to cover his own negligence.

We started from Jalapa at half-past nine, A.M., Thursday, the 22nd. The *diligencia*, drawn sometimes by horses, sometimes by mules, according to the nature of the road, but always by six or seven in number, carries, in three seats, nine inside passengers in the *one* body of the carriage—not being divided into *coupé*, etc., as in France. We started with more than our complement, for in the hind seat (instead of three, the regulation number) was an entire family, consisting of *six* individuals, namely, a Mexican general of division, and on his lap a child; his young wife next to him, and on *her* lap a child; lastly, a grown-up daughter of the general by his first marriage, and on *her* lap a child! The extraordinary-looking general! You would, indeed, have required to be credibly assured, as we were, that he was *really* a general,

ere you could either have guessed at or believed such a fact. He was frightened out of his wits about the robbers; so were his females; but as far as Puebla there was nothing to fear. Outside we had the administrador of the Puebla diligence office, accompanied by two well-armed and sturdy soldiers of the corps of the *Fieles* (faithful) *de Puebla*; and, for my own part, I felt there was very little danger indeed of our being waylaid or robbed.

Smack went the *cochero's* whip, then, and away went the *diligencia*! Rising from the centre of the town, we soon had, all around, the magnificent scenery, which, with so much pleasure, I had witnessed on my way to Jilotepec. The road, in some parts, was terrific, for though paved, the large blocks of stone were every where loosened, and lying about; while great holes and ruts sent us jumping, every now and then, towards the roof of the coach, "To make, but never to mend," certainly seems to be the motto in Mexico.

The luxuriant vegetation, and variety of woodland scenery, do not extend beyond three leagues from Jalapa; where, as you go on rapidly rising, the country gradually takes a different aspect. Jalapa, as you have seen, stands about 4,300 feet

above the level of the sea; and commencing a rise on that elevation, we soon exchange the tropical productions for the hardy plant and the pine forest. The prickly pear, however, the *nopal*, as called here, is seen every where, and, in some parts, it strengthens into a somewhat uncouth and fantastic-looking tree; while the great member of the Cactus family, called "*el organo*," from its resemblance to that instrument, rises in close contact one with another, and presents the same appearance as the front of a large church organ.

Thus, by degrees, the Mexican oak, and many other hardy trees, came up to replace the more tender tribes; and these were succeeded by pines, at first here and there, but gradually dilating into large and dark forests, which clothed the mountains to their very tops. At the same time, and also by degrees, we came to a soil showing a highly ferruginous character; and displaying on the surface, lumps of scoria and other volcanic substances, which ended in a continuous lava spread over the ground. It stood, sometimes, in gigantic pinnacles; sometimes it formed arches on the face of the heights through which our road was cut: it lay now in concrete masses, now in

black and crumbling cinders; and many large trees having been felled, and unremoved, the effect produced altogether was strange and desolate. Here, too, the clay-built and thatched cottages of the low countries, had given way to wooden houses; straight trunks of trees built up longitudinally, forming the walls, and shingles, the roofs. Another curious trait of these gloomy woods, at this time, consisted in the remains of field fortifications, composed of scoria and trunks of trees, erected at intervals, to assail the American army on its march to the interior.

The origin of all the volcanic matter lying here in such immense quantities, and for leagues in extent, is unknown. Of the internal convulsions and heavings of the earth, which have ended in such explosions, and scattered such overwhelming torrents of burning lava over the surface, we absolutely know nothing. The antiquarian may stand and contemplate the certain proofs of the direful workings of his mother earth; of her throes and convulsions when pouring forth from the mighty crater the tormenting fire which preyed upon her vitals. The proofs of these volcanic wonders he may look curiously upon, but he must

rest content in utter ignorance of how and when the *cause* produced these grand effects. His imagination may carry him back to chaos; he may fancy that these are vestiges of the workings of our planet long before what geologists call "the first formation:" but all must be guess-work—no guide through such utter darkness. The liquid lava," says Mr. Bullock, "seems to have burst like an immense bubble, leaving arches of solid crust from sixty to eighty feet high, and three or four thick; all hollow underneath, and spread at the bottom with loose cinders. This valley is bounded on the left by a ridge or wall of immense height; as if the great flood of melted matter had been chilled and stopped in its course. In some parts, it seemed as if the lava and scoria had been in part decomposed; and in these, several species of aloes, yucca, dracinæ, and other strange and picturesque plants, were thriving luxuriantly. In other places, thousands of trunks of huge trees, crumbling into dust, added wildness to the scene of desolation."

As we travelled along, in these high regions, we had constant views of the two high mountains—Cofré de Perote, or "*Nauh Campátepetl*," and the

peak of Orizava, or "*Citláltepetl.*" The latter is 17,375 the former about 13,475 feet above the level of the sea. They are connected by a ridge of lower mountains; and the giant termini, with their snow-capped summits glittering in the rays of the sun, have an appearance surprisingly grand and imposing.

Emerging at length from the pines and the scoria, we arrived at Las Vigas; an Indian village, the houses constructed of wood. We had changed horses several times before, breakfasting towards noon at an intermediate hamlet. From Las Vigas we continued to ascend till we reached Cruz Blanca, another Indian village, said to be the highest point of carriage road in Mexico. It is about 8,000 feet above the level of the sea. Thence we wound round the pine mountains to Perote, where we arrived at about half-past five, P.M., not to start again till three A.M., for Puebla.

Jalapa lies on the eastern side of the Cofré, and Perote, closer to it, on the western side. We had come winding round in a north-westerly direction; and from Perote to Puebla, our route lay along the south-western side of the Cofré, the connecting chain, and the peak of Orizáva.

Perote, situated on a deep sandy soil, with uninteresting scenery, is a miserable-looking town. At some distance, is a large fortification; only useful as a sort of political bastile. The inn where we stopped was spacious and ghostly, and one large bed-room was assigned to H— and myself. We had a tolerably good dinner; after which, I walked out in the evening to see what I could of Perote.

At the door, a tall, dark, dirty, assassin-looking fellow accosted us. "Do you want an escort?" he enquired.

"Why," said M. Thullier, "I think not. We have two of the '*fieles*' with us, and we are all well armed within."

"Look ye," replied the *guard*, for such he said he was, "the roads are very bad, very dangerous *hereabouts* — many *ladrones* are prowling about; I advise you to take an escort the first stage."

"Well, well," said T—, "two or three of you may go with us, just to keep a look out a-head. *We* will fight."

The soldier said he could not undertake the escort with fewer than four men; so a bargain

was struck, and each passenger was to pay a dollar to the escort.

"I have engaged these men, you see, Mr. Robertson," said M. Thullier, as we walked away, "for although they take the title of National Guards, they are in reality gentlemen of the road; and I think, on the whole, it is best to pay them moderately in their former capacity."

Thus are matters managed with the *soi disant* guards, "on the road" in Mexico.

We soon returned from our stroll, over the dismal town of Perote, which presented little more to our view than a deep sandy way in every street, the houses enclosed by high walls; the front one having a great *porton* or gate, entering upon the dwelling. I certainly saw little, and that indistinctly; but that little gave me no desire whatever to see more.

On entering our large bed-room, I found H— in a great fright. "One of the robbers has already been here," she said; "and with the greatest difficulty I have got quit of him." On going into particulars, I found that our escort robber had with H— begun his canvass among the passengers for the poll tax we had agreed to pay. When, at last,

H— understood his object, she said to him, "Yes, yes, I will pay a dollar, but go away—go and arrange with the gentlemen."

When we rose from our truckle beds (*catres*), ready dressed as usual, at two, A.M., the cold was intense; and outside indeed, we found the ground white with hoar frost, and the pools of water covered with ice. However, at three, A.M., we were all in our places in the *diligencia*, our robber escort looming in the dark around us. They went one stage, collected their dollars, asked if we wished them to go any farther, took off their hats to us, and returned.

We saw little of the country between Perote and Tepeyahualco, and lost little, as you may infer from the district being called "el mal pais" —the sorry country; barren and bleak. But from Tepeyahualco, it began greatly to improve, and the "Cofré" and "Orizava" being constantly in view, under different aspects, as we advanced, an ever varying grandeur pervaded the scene. Many *haciendas* lay scattered about, during this part of the way, and as each had invariably a large handsome chapel attached to it, the country looked as if it were dotted with parish churches. The exten-

sive fields were well cultivated; and here abounds the aloe, which in Mexico is called the *Maguey* (pronounced *Maguy*), and from which, the celebrated *Pulque* (*Poólkay*), a universal drink among the Mexicans, is made.

We were now, you understand, on the table-lands. From Tepeyahualco we went on to "*el ojo del agua,*" where there is a fine clear *tepid* piece of water. It rises from its spring, bubbling and smoking; but though coming up warm, it gets colder as it spreads into a tolerably-sized sheet of water. Close to the spring-head were three or four Indian women, using the ready-hot water for washing clothes.

At mid-day we entered the town of Nopalúca, where we had our dinner-breakfast; and travelling from three A.M. till noon (nine hours), on a cup of chocolate or coffee only, has the effect, I do assure you, of bestirring the gastronomic affections: so that, under such circumstances, the viands are not over nicely criticised.

The dust, which had begun to annoy us from Tepeyahualco, became insufferable from "*El ojo del Agua*" to Puebla. It went before us; it followed us; it kept us company on either side; it

drove into the *diligencia*, and made its exit with unceasing assiduity. The men outside appeared to be heaps of dust, with each a sort of human outline; inside, our lining of the subtle substance was *interior*; we gulped it down at every breath we drew, and were all but suffocated by its unceremonious and unwelcome occupation of our throats. It was, therefore, with a pleasure commensurate with our previous sufferings, that about five o'clock P.M., we found our driver cracking his whip, and the *diligencia* giving a jolt extraordinary, as we rattled over the rough large stones of the wide, paved streets of the famous city of Puebla. We drove into the ample *patio* of the great Diligencia Hotel; and there, as it is generally much crowded, our junior *administrador*, who had accompanied us from Jalapa, immediately secured one splendid bed-room for us (separate ones we had ceased to look for); and in it, after having dinner, we were to rest till three o'clock in the morning.

LETTER XXIII.

PUEBLA TO MEXICO.

Mexico, March, 1849.

As we had got to Perote, so we got to Puebla—that is, without being attacked by highwaymen. We had passed through the Pinal, a splendid breadth of pine-tree mountain scenery; and as this was the favourite haunt—a convenient point of attack for the robbers; when we saw them not there, it was considered that we no longer stood "in the imminent breach," that we had passed the main danger of the road.

I had a letter for Mr. T—, of Puebla, and I went to his house on my arrival. I had an opportunity, while out, of examining the streets as I sauntered leisurely along. The view showed me at once that I was in the best of Spanish American cities I had yet visited. The houses were massive and handsome, the rectilinear streets wide, well-

paved and clean; and the whole denoted the possession of quiet and comfort, with no small share of opulence. Puebla is, I believe, the second city in Mexico; the number of its inhabitants is variously calculated at from sixty to ninety thousand. It is favourably known for its manufactures, especially that of cotton calico, here called *mantas*. It is celebrated for its noble cathedral, with its gorgeous interior. And let me state, by the way, that the full or proper name of the city is Puebla de los Angeles; for it is a miracle well accredited and received by the truly devout Catholics of the place, and by the mass of the Indians, that during the erection of the cathedral, angels descended every night, and *doubled* the work which the human labourers had performed during the preceding day. As regards the edifice itself, I may say that I have not often seen a finer specimen of ecclesiastical architecture than that which distinguishes the cathedral of Puebla de los Angeles.

It stands, with its principal front, about two hundred feet in width, on the south side of the great Plaza, on the opposite of which is the governor's palace; the two other sides of the square being occupied by *portales*, or piazzas filled

with shops, with several open passages leading into the adjoining streets.

The cathedral is elevated on a stone platform of ten feet in height, so that it stands boldly out from the surrounding buildings. Over the front, or west end, are two lofty towers; and between them is the main entrance, a large and handsome portico, surmounted by stone sculpture and mouldings. The depth of the building is about five hundred feet; the whole constructed with much solidity, supported by massive buttresses; the material is a hard stone, resembling blue basalt, the stones chisel-squared, and the joints pointed.

The nave is lofty; but, as happens in many cathedrals, the effect is destroyed by a screen and buildings over the choir. The aisles are divided off by massive columns, and the floors and pillars of the "Tabernacle" are of Puebla marble, found in the quarries of Totamehuacan and Tecali, the first, two or three leagues, the other, seven from the city. Small side chapels, receding from pillars on either side, are enclosed by rails, fancifully and gaudily painted. A chandelier, weighing some tons, which depends from the dome, is said to have cost in the mere cleaning, some years ago, four

thousand dollars. "The great altar, imposing in its appearance, is composed of a great variety of Mexican marbles, including a very transparent white. The rail and steps," says Mr. Mayer, "which are of fine marble, lead to a circular platform, eight or ten feet above the floor, beneath which is the sepulchre of the bishops (constructed entirely of the most precious materials), divided into niches and panels, and covered with a depressed dome of marble, relieved by bronze and gold circles, from the centre of which depends a silver lamp, for ever burning on the habitation of the dead." It must be observed, that the great altar is so large and prominent, as to be very much disproportioned to the building in which it stands. It is altogether, however, so rich in marble and precious stones, lofty columns (with burnished gold plinths and capitals), in its magnificent altar of silver, crowded with statues, etc., that Mr. Bullock declares that, after having travelled over most of Europe, he knows nothing like it.

The images are on the same scale of elaborate, but often fantastical and gaudy adornment, with pearls and precious stones innumerable, and the church plate and jewels being rich and costly in the

extreme—the cathedral of Puebla stands, in this respect, pre-eminent over all the other churches in Mexico.

Notwithstanding a pressing invitation from Mr. T— to dine with *him*, we joined the *table d'hôte* of the great hotel, where our party was augmented by the arrival of the *diligencia* from Mexico to Vera Cruz.

And *apropos* of that simultaneous arrival. At Jalapa we had heard of a *pronunciamiento* (for who has ever been in Mexico for a month without hearing that a *pronunciamiento*—a ricketty essay at revolution—had taken place?) and now the passengers brought word that it had been put down. Both pieces of news, at Jalapa and at Puebla, were matters to think of for two minutes, no more; and then to be dismissed from the mind.

"Indeed!" says the recipient of the news at Jalapa, lighting his cigar, and puffing away; and when, at Puebla, he is told the *pronunciamiento* is put down. "*Vaya pues*," he adds, "very well!" and again he smokes his cigar, forgetting the matter altogether.

After dinner, our two French friends walked out with H— and myself, to show her what could be seen of Puebla by night. We went to the

Plaza Mayor, which is handsome; and the view of the cathedral, externally, was imposing. After rambling through two or three of the best streets, we returned; and next I went to visit Mr. T—. I found several agreeable foreigners with him, and time slipped past; and it was near ten before I got back to my hotel. There I found H— in tribulation, not only fearing another robber visit; but fast making up her mind that I had been waylaid, having been assured that one-half of the lower class of Pueblanos subsisted by street robbery and pillage.

At Puebla, we took leave of our friends Messrs. Thullier and Pommier, who had lightened the journey much by their pleasantries and anecdotes, as well as by their fund of general information, given in an easy way, touching the country which we had come to visit. Their places in the *diligencia* were supplied by two other Frenchmen from Oajaca, there established in business. The general, too, and his family (to our no small contentment) were transferred to the *daily diligencia* which runs between Puebla and Mexico.

In lieu of them, and of a young Santanderino (also transferred), we had an old gentleman, who never uttered a word during our journey; another,

scarcely less taciturn; a rich miller (as all millers are); and a principal baker of Mexico (poor, as all bakers are); who both spoke *ex cathedrâ* of the cereal products of Mexico, proving, to my satisfaction, the great amount of riches, which the country derived from this most important source of national wealth.

We started, as usual, before daybreak, about four A.M., and this time without escort, or any other protection. The morning dawned upon us, ere long; and then we found we now had, on our left, the volcanoes of Popocatepétl, and of Iztaccihuatl, names which it cost me no small trouble to master. The latter is pronounced as if it were spelt Itstaseéwattle. The former was obviously rendered by Anglo-Mexican wit into "Pop-the-cat-in-the-kettle."

Both these mountains stand out in bold relief, crowned with eternal snows; and when these glitter under the first or the last rays of the sun, as he rises or sets, nothing can be more magnificent. The absolute height of Popocatepétl is 17,884, and Iztaccihuatl 15,704 feet. From their bases, whence they rise into their great cone, they may be 10,000 and 8,000 feet respectively.

The most splendid view we obtained was after leaving Rio Frio. This point, 8000 or 9,000 feet above the level of the sea, lies in 19° 25′ N. and 98° 38′ W.; Popocatèpétl in 19° N. and 98° 32′ W.; while Iztaccihuatl is in 19° 12′ N. and 98° 36′ W.; so that you will observe we had the two mountains very nearly in a line due north of us at Rio Frio. That post (famous for the robbers, whom, notwithstanding all assurances and anticipations to the contrary, we did *not* see)—that post lies on the face of a ridge of mountains, which stretches immediately to the north from Iztaccihuatl, and which is covered with oaks and pines. We kept ascending the ridge from the Puebla side, and got to the highest part of the road some time before reaching Rio Frio. To this latter place, the rapidity of our flight down from the higher point was something amazing. We stopped at Rio Frio to breakfast; and a very good one we had, at the solitary inn, kept by a German widow, who was specially pleased when H— held converse with her in her native tongue, and who launched out, on this incontrovertible basis of intimacy, into strange accounts of "the robbers."

After an hour's halt, we proceeded on our route

through the *Black forest,* the haunt, as far as we were concerned, of invisible banditti; and it was after emerging from the forest, that looking backward as we rapidly descended, we had the most imposing view of the mountains, with the dark, hanging forest stretching out between. It was a sight to strike the lover of Nature with wonder, if not to evoke feelings of reverence and awe.

In connection with these pine forests, I have not yet mentioned the *carboneros,* or charcoal-burners in the mountains. You see fires made, and blue smoke ascending from a great number of points, almost as if they were purposely clearing away the woods. But they are all the fires of the *carboneros;* a race of the most uncouth of all the barbarous classes to be found in this country. Deep, dark caves are the habitations of many of these Indians; who, both in appearance and habits, sink down to the lowest scale of humanity.

We were descending, then, to the plain of Mexico, so celebrated by those travellers who have, on their first arrival, had a bright sunny view of it, from this approach. Alas! to us it was a sealed book! A hazy atmosphere and volumes,

of dust prevented us from seeing any thing beyond the brown arid ground about us; the uninteresting gloomy, stagnant-looking lake of Chalco, as we passed near it—a great saliferous bed of encrusted mud, where straggling Indians were preparing a sort of salt used by themselves; and dust—dust every where.

Well—as *we* saw nothing—I must let you know shortly what impressions were made on the minds of other travellers, on their approach to Mexico.

Mr. Ward came upon the city by a different route from the Vera Cruz highway. He was, like ourselves, disappointed. "The approach to Mexico," he says, "did not give us a very favourable idea of the capital, or of the country about it. The valley on the Otumba side possesses none of the beautiful features which are so remarkable to the south and east; for, having more recently formed a part of the great lake of Tezcuco, which in the rainy season still extends as far as San Cristóval, the waters in receding have left a barren tract, covered with a crust of carbonate of soda. Sterility prevails, with few interruptions, from the village of San Juan Teotihuacán to the convent of Guadalupe." The avenue, Mr. Ward tells us, ex-

tending from Guadalupe, is fine; but that the suburb to which it leads, by no means corresponds to it, being dreary and desolate; all the houses formerly occupied by an Indian population, composed of mud bricks, baked in the sun, being entirely in ruins. "Such a scene," of course, "agreed too ill with the picture which Humboldt has drawn of Mexico, not to occasion us considerable disappointment."—Ward's Mexico in 1827, pp. 219, 220.

Mr. Bullock, F.L.S., celebrated for his museum, travelled in Mexico in 1823. He entered Mexico, as we did, from Vera Cruz; and I find, he was, like ourselves, wholly disappointed.*

The late celebrated, but unfortunate traveller,

* You will find a short, but interesting memoir of Captain Lyon, in one of Maunder's admirable compilations—his "Universal Biography." When I gave you *Excerpta* from various Mexican travellers, in my P.S. to Letter XXI., "Jalapa," I made no mention of Captain Lyon. But the fact is, that in his account of that beautiful place, while it corroborates what I and others have said, he is far more full and interesting than any of us. Captain Lyon remained ten days at Jalapa, and he dedicates twenty pages to the city and its environs. To have quoted him to advantage, I must have become a plagiarist, and transferred "en cuerpo y alma," as the Spanish phrase goes, his twenty pages to my own book; and that might have been a dangerous experiment, as well as a not very fair proceeding on my part.

Captain G. F. Lyon, R.N., F.R.S.,* who published, in 1828, a journal of a residence and tour in the Republic of Mexico, in the year 1826. He entered the capital by a very fine approach from Tolúca. "From an eminence," he says, "we came suddenly in sight of the great valley of Mexico, with its beautiful city appearing in the centre, surrounded by diverging shady paséos, bright fields, and picturesque haciendas. The great lake of Tezcuco lay immediately beyond it, shaded by a low floating cloud of exhalations from its surface, which hid from our view the bases of the volcanoes of Popocatepétl and Iztaccihuatl; while their snowy summits, brightly glowing beneath the direct rays of the sun which but partially illumined the plains, gave a delightfully novel appearance to the whole scene before me."

"The arid, glazed and silent surface of those interminable levels," says Mr. Charles Joseph Latrobe, "over which the whirling column of sand is seen stalking with its stately motion in the midst of a hot and stagnant atmosphere, and upon whose surface he continually sees painted the magic and illusory pictures of the *mirage*, with their transparent waters and reflected scenes; the

huge dark piles of distant mountains, range behind range; the strange colouring of the landscape, far and near; the isolated volcanic cones springing up from the dead flats, and the lofty peaks of the great volcanoes far in the distance, gleaming in the blue sky with their snowy summits; the numerous churches, each with its dome and towers, mocking the deserted waste around, and the wretched groups of mud cottages in its vicinity, by its stately architecture. All this, seen through an atmosphere of such transcendant purity, that vast as the expanded lanscape seems, no just idea of its immensity can be formed from the calculations of the eye, embodies forth, not perhaps the picturesque, nor perhaps the beautiful, but most assuredly the sublime.

"And when approaching the main valley, the villages thicken around him, with their streets cheered and beautified, amid the general sterility, by groups of the graceful Peruvian pepper-tree; and the roads are seen crowded by long strings of laden mules and gay cavaliers; and the stupendous works of human design harmonise with those of nature, and prepare him for the sight of the most

extraordinary scenes in the world, whether we regard the works of men or those of God—the Artificer of all. And such is the valley and city of Mexico." Mr. Latrobe came in by the same approach as Mr. Ward.

Madame C— de la B— entered the capital, as we did, from Vera Cruz. She was also disappointed of the "*grand view;*" but, being of a lively temperament, she thus adroitly turns her disappointment into an advantage. "At length we arrived," says our charming authoress, "at the heights looking down on the great valley, celebrated in all parts of the world, with its framework of everlasting mountains, its snow-crowned volcanoes, great lakes and fertile plains, all surrounding the favoured city of Montezuma, the proudest boast of his conqueror—once, of Spain's many diadems, the brightest. *But the day had overcast*; nor is this the most favourable road for entering Mexico. The innumerable spires of the distant city *were faintly seen.* The volcanoes *were enveloped in clouds.*" . . . So Madame C— de la B—, like ourselves, saw little or nothing. But the shade of Montezuma had arisen; the imaginative powers

had been called up; and with the *calamo currente* of a ready writer, Madame C— de la B— draws aside the curtain of Time, takes a vision of the Past, instead of the breathing Present, and dashes off a splendid picture of the great panorama which must have burst on the eyes of Cortes, when he first looked down upon the table land. But when the vision is exchanged again for reality, "the scenery on this side of Mexico," our fair authoress states, "is arid and flat; and where the waters of the lagunes, covered with their gay canoes, once surrounded the city, forming canals through its streets, we now see melancholy marshy lands, little enlivened by the great flights of wild ducks and other waterfowl."

All that I have as yet said and quoted cannot have prepared you for Brantz Mayer's first view of the valley of Mexico. I wish I could give you all he says; but that I could not conscientiously do; it is too diffuse for mere transfer, although, where it stands, it is not a bit too long. Mr. Mayer's honest enthusiasm is, as an acute mercantile friend of mine used to say of everything that pleased him, "very much to the point."

"A sudden clearing in the forest," says Mr. Brantz Mayer, "disclosed the magnificent VALLEY OF MEXICO.

"The sight of land to the sea-worn sailor—the sight of home to the wanderer, who has not beheld for years the scene of his boyhood—are not hailed with more thrilling delight, than was the exclamation from one of our passengers, as he announced the prospect."

Mr. Mayer, disliking to deal in hyperboles, is afraid to describe the valley. He has, however, seen the Simplon, the Splûgen, the view from Rhigi, the Rhine, the prospect from Vesuvius, "over the lovely bay of Naples, its indolent waves sleeping in the warm sunshine on their purple bed;" "but none of these scenes compare with the valley of Mexico."

Neither pen nor pencil, Mr. Mayer affirms, can do justice to the valley; and, therefore, he contents himself with attempting a catalogue of the valley's features, though, even so, he says, "I am confident I must fail to describe or paint them."

Mr. Mayer's picture is highly coloured; "but nature here reigns paramount; nothing to interfere

with her in her vast domain." "Yet, one thing," says Mr. Mayer, "was wanting. Over the immense expanse there seemed scarce an evidence of life. There were no figures in the picture. It lay torpid in the sunlight—vast, solitary, and melancholy . . The silence was almost super-natural . . . It was a picture of still life, inanimated in every feature."

Lieutenant Ruxton had the advantage, like Mr. Mayer, of opening up his view of the valley, "bathed by the soft flooding light of the setting sun."

"The first impression," Mr. Ruxton says, "which struck me on seeing the valley of Mexico, was the perfect, almost unnatural tranquillity of the scene. The valley, which is about sixty miles long, by forty in breadth, is, on all sides, enclosed by mountains, the most elevated of which are on the southern side; in the distance are the volcanoes of Popocatepétl and Iztaccihuatl, and numerous peaks of different elevation. The lakes of Tezcuco and Chalco glitter in the sun like burnished silver, or, shaded by the vapours which often rise from them, lie cold and tranquil on the plain. The distant view of the city, with its white buildings

and numerous churches, its regular streets, and shaded *paséos*, greatly augments the beauty of the scene, over which floats a solemn, delightful tranquillity."

Such are the impressions, compressed and inadequately conveyed, of the pleasant writers who have preceded me, on first viewing the plain on which the capital of Mexico lies.

I have only to add, or to repeat, that nothing can be conceived more *triste* and uninviting than the approach to Mexico, on the Vera Cruz route, on such a sort of day as we had. The land is not only bare, parched, and monotonous, almost without a single tree, but the immense extent of white and saliferous fields on the right adds greatly to the dreary aspect of the scene.

At length we found ourselves fast approaching the precincts of the city. On either side of the raised and paved road, poplars began to show themselves, and seemed at last to pretend to something of the character of an avenue: huts, houses, and other large buildings, all equally ruinous, disfigured the road side; dirty Indians, lazily lying about, were their possessors. We found

the suburbs equally mean and filthy. We were petrified! But in a very few minutes these features suddenly disappeared; and all at once, without previous warning, as it were, we found ourselves in handsome streets of something like palaces. We were in the centre of Mexico, the most splendid city on the continent of America.

END OF VOL. I.

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